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STRENGTH FOR THE WAY

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STRENGTH FOR THE WAY

And other Sermons and Addresses

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PREFACE

THIS volume is published in response to a number of requests that certain sermons and addresses delivered in the year 1901-2, when the writer was President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, should be preserved in a more permanent form. It is well understood that such requests, made in all sincerity and kindness, are not intended to be taken too seriously. And it is to be feared that there is little in these pages deserving even temporary preservation; while it is certain that such a collection does not possess a satisfactory literary unity. A measure of repetition is unavoidable, while the contents remain miscellaneous; the more so, since two articles from the *London Quarterly Review*, reproduced in response to similar requests, have been included. But, reasonably or unreasonably, the book is put forth, largely in acknowledgment of great kindness shown to the writer during his year of office. It might well be dedicated—were a formal dedication in place—to the many friends who made duty easy, and the loyal Methodists who always uphold by their prayers those who try, however imperfectly, to serve them.

W. T. DAVISON.

HANDSWORTH, *October* 1902.

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I

Strength for the Way¹

I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.—PHIL. iv. 13.

THIS may sound like a boast; it is really the triumphant paradox of a self-distrustful soul that has found its way to an inexhaustible source of energy. Like many of St. Paul's great utterances, it springs from a comparatively trivial occasion. The Philippian Christians had sent to the apostle in his imprisonment at Rome a substantial present, and he thanks them for their considerateness in his own stately and gracious way. They had done well to communicate with him in his affliction; their gift was true Christian fruit, brought forth, reckoned up to their account; a sacrifice well-pleasing to God had thus been offered through Epaphroditus, who had brought timely provision for the wants of God's faithful servant.

It was needed and not needed. The prisoner required sustenance, alleviation of prison hardships; the man and the friend rejoiced in manifested sympathy; but the apostle had learnt not to depend on circumstances and conditions, on outward comfort and

¹ The President's official sermon, preached before the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Brunswick Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 28th July 1901.

ease. "Lord of himself though not of lands," lord of the chances and changes of a chequered life, St. Paul had been "initiated," he tells us, into a mystery. There is no mystery like that of life, with all its complexities, ironies, disappointments, and despair; there is no secret like that of knowing how to thread its labyrinth with perfect ease, ready for every issue. Ah! to be able to understand man's relation to it all, man who is at the same time a part of nature and above nature, like Milton's "tawny lion pawing to get free," half of him still embedded in the earth, the other half struggling for a freedom he has not yet made his own. "I," says St. Paul, "have learnt the secret, mastered the problem, achieved my liberty. I know how to be abased and how to abound, how to be filled and how to be hungry"—here is a lord of creation indeed. For Paul's "I know" implies a practical, not a mere theoretical knowledge. Philosophers without number can furnish you with maxims describing the way, which not one of them for the life of him could tread for himself. But lest any mistake should arise, the apostle changes his phrase from knowledge to power, from "I know" to "I can"; he broadens out into a yet wider generalisation; he sweeps all circumstances actual and possible into the same immense category of absolutely mastered conditions, and dares to cry—while we shrink from the boldness of his words—"I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."

It is a great thing that in taking this text we have before us the language of actual experience. To take a text—what does that mean? The words are "in the Bible"; but who said them, who wrote them, what right had the author thus to speak, how can his state-

ment be proved? Here is a man whose name is known, his identity not questioned, his history familiar, his letters genuine, who tells us modestly, but frankly, what he himself has experienced and accomplished. He leaves the Stoics and Epicureans whom he met in the streets of Athens far behind him; they are toiling laboriously up the lower slopes of the mountain over which he flies with majestic and victorious wing. A high state of grace, this? No doubt. But Paul knew the meaning of his own words, and when in chapter iii. he says, "I count all things but loss" for Christ, he can add, "for whom I did suffer the loss of all things." The words of such a man, whose history we can recall, are not mere brag or bravado; he calmly tells us that this is where he stands, this is his relation to the great riddle of existence, this is what life means to him.

Such an utterance deserves ever renewed study. The words are easily read, glibly they may slip from the tongue; but what conflicts, what toils, what agonies lie behind them! It is worth all we have to make them our own. For our personal individual life, with its long and painful discipline; for our church life, with its great tasks, its high professions, its poor achievements, its many failures; and no less for our life in the midst of a world which looks to us for guidance and help, and too often finds itself in the position of the father in anguish over his boy, possessed with a demon—"I came to Thy disciples, and they could not cast it out." If this day we could but get a clearer view and firmer hold of the secret latent in these words, guided by that Spirit who prompted Paul to write them for the Church at Philippi and the Churches of all time!

One word on the exposition. The word "Him" in R.V. depends on a better-attested reading than the "Christ" of the A.V. The translation "in" brings out the meaning of the preposition better than "through." A more literal translation still, one that I venture to adopt in preaching to-day, would be, "*I have strength for all things in Him that enableth me.*" The great Saviour—the great Absolver—the great Companion—these are phrases found in Scripture, or in hymns, or in literature. Let us study the lessons of this verse concerning "the great Enabler."

I. DIVINE INDWELLING.

1. We find ourselves in the text at the top of a high ladder. We must climb it a round at a time, and begin at the very foot. The antipodes of the man who says, "I can do everything," is he who says, "I can do nothing," and we need not stay long to find such men, for Christ says to all His disciples, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing."

Dwell for a moment on this impotence of human nature by itself. Man is not deficient in ideas, in hopes, in resolves. The tragedy of man's life lies in his combined greatness and littleness; his aims are so high, his attainments so low. He strikes the stars with his head and grovels next moment on the earth. "The sorest of all pains," says Herodotus, "is to be master of many things in thought and of nothing in reality." There have been those who have professed of themselves to secure such mastery. The Stoic boasted of his "self-sufficingness." Medea, in the drama, when her husband proved unfaithful, when her children were murdered, and all had turned against her,

being asked, "What remains?" replied, "Myself." It has been said, with a certain truth—

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, Thou must,
The soul replies, I can.

But how often the "natural" unregenerate soul replies, I cannot. "The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." Ideas, hopes, resolutions—these we have in abundance; it is the power to attain we lack. Our finite frames do not suffice for the infinite passion that expands and rends them; our fallen and impotent nature cannot compass what we none the less recognise to be the true scope of divinely given faculties. We cannot reach the goal, we cannot even make a fair start in the race, to gain the prize which we know is intended to be ours.

2. The power of natural religion is often relied on to strengthen man in his weakness, and enable him to realise his highest aspirations. There is a power in what is ambiguously called "natural religion." It is true that in God we live and move and have our being, and that He is not far from every one of us.

But the two chief forms which religion, apart from special revelation, has taken in history exemplify a weakness here. They emphasise respectively the sovereignty of God over us—His transcendence in relation to the creature, or the abiding of God in the world He has made, His immanence in creation. The Transcendence of God is a great truth, illustrated in Islam or in later Deism. The night-watchman in Cairo, in announcing the hour, cries, "I proclaim the absolute glory of the living King, who sleepeth not,

nor dieth. Allah Akbar—great is God!" A sublime creed, but it leads to fatalism or to mechanical views of the universe. It allows of no bridge from heaven to earth, no mediator, no real union between God and man.

The Immanence of God is also a great truth. God is not only on the throne, directing all, but in the universe He has made, supporting, inhabiting, informing all. But when this side of the truth is exclusively or unduly dwelt upon, it leads to Pantheism—the doctrine that "all that laugh and all that weep and all that breathe are one slight ripple on the boundless deep that moves and all is gone." The whole abides, we pass; the power within holds us up for a moment only, then other types succeed. The doctrine that God is the All destroys the meaning of individual life first, and of religion next. Pantheism is akin to Atheism—so do extremes meet. A God who is simply all, is nothing.

The Theist of to-day tries to combine these two great truths of the Transcendence and Immanence of God, and so avoid the danger of Deism and Pantheism on either hand. His doctrine is sound, but left to itself, without the support of revelation and the light shed on it by Christianity, it lacks secure foundation. How can we make sure there is such a God? Pure Theism as an abstract creed, without the Incarnation and the Atonement, has never stood alone for long in history.

3. Christianity teaches that God has not left us alone to grope our way towards Him. In the doctrines of the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, we find the reconciliation of the two fundamental truths of the Divine Immanence and Transcendence. We are

thus delivered from the mechanical hardness of Deism on the one hand, and the enervating laxity of Pantheism on the other. We believe in God the Father over us, God the Son for us, God the Spirit in us—three Persons and one God.

The reading "Christ" in the text furnishes a very good meaning, but it is better to follow the true reading "Him," which suggests the whole love and power of God the Father, the whole grace of the revealed Son, the whole strength of the indwelling Spirit whom Christ promised. Christians are those who through grace have entered into this vital relation with God in Christ by the Spirit. We are in Him, He is in us. The preposition "through" puts Him too far away, makes the action too much our own, carried out as through an instrument. The relation between the Christian and the indwelling Christ is vital, as Christ Himself taught in the allegory of the Vine and the Branches. Christ says to His followers, "Abide in Me and I in you"—two sides of the same mystic fellowship. He is to abide in us and we are to make room for Him so to dwell, and the personal life resulting is to be our life. But the deeper aspect of the truth, and the one contained in the text, is that we are to dwell in Him, so that the very life we live is to be not ours, but His. It is not that part of the work is human, part Divine—all is to be Divine, all human. And this deep spiritual meaning is lost in the translation "through." So important is this difference that Bishop Westcott has said that he would count the ten years of his life well spent in connection with the R.V., if nothing more had been done than to restore the phrase "in Christ" to its due place in the New Testament. Here it forms an essential part of the

teaching—"I have strength for all things 'in' Him that enableth me."

4. We are to realise this by faith. The text, instead of denying human weakness, presupposes it. We may well be startled by words which claim so much. But they claim so much because so little. All things in Him, nothing outside of Him. Paul depends on no external conditions, because he depends wholly on Christ. Not on wealth, nor in the power to do without it; not in fulness, nor in the power to bear hunger; not on friends and their gifts, nor on the self-reliance which is able to dispense with these. Paul rises above all these human states and conditions, because he has discovered a deeper, richer source of energy than anything without him, or within him, as an unaided man. The very self as a separate force is gone: I live; no, not I; my very life is not my own, it is Christ's in me.

Thus Paul realised what Christ taught. He says in 2 Corinthians xii., "I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may spread its tabernacle over me. When I am weak, then I am strong; for then the power of Christ is most seen, and that is the ground of my glorying." The treasure is in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. I appeal to-day, therefore, to those who know themselves to be weak. You strong ones must seek elsewhere, till you find out your own weakness—God grant by not too painful a way. But the feeble, the timid, the self-distrustful, are those to whom the text will be precious. Those who have nothing possess all things in Him who became poor that they might be rich indeed.

This truth lies, of course, at the very basis of Christian

life, from justification onwards. But we need to get fresh hold of it in our sanctification and the whole course of our Christian life. Faith in the great Enabler, have we it? This faith is not to be thought of as if it were itself a saviour; it is only the channel through which infinite strength is made our own. *Tenco et tencor*—I hold and am held—but the latter forms our comfort. My confidence lies not in this, that I grasp Christ with so admirably trained and disciplined a faith, but that He holds me, and will not let me go. I have my strength in Him who enables.

5. Still, we must do our part. We may be unconsciously drawing ourselves off from that indwelling life, so that it cannot pour its fulness in. How about the roots of this plant, and the earth in which they grow? That is an all-too-suggestive phrase in the parable—"it had not much earth"—an exact description of the Christian life of many in our day. What this generation needs is not the "breadth," about which it often prates, but depth. Wide sympathies abound; indefatigable and multifarious energies are put forth in all kinds of activity, but there is too little deep, experimental hold of great religious verities. On Dartmoor, when the tap-root strikes the rock, the tree is doomed; and because the rock is everywhere so soon struck, spreading trees are rarely found.

We need perpetually to get back afresh to the deep things of God, to cultivate the secret roots of religious life, to keep very near to the fountain-head. Need I say that that means prayer, and prayer in a much more intimate sense of the word than its current acceptance? Tennyson defines prayer as "The mystery where God-in-man is one with man-in-God." That is the region

in which the Christian should draw his vital breath. "I in them and they in Me"—what a definition of true life! It is the life of my true self that I am to learn to live, and I do not find that in myself, but in God. So far as I live thus I am alive and well; to depart from this, means disease and death. The physician's maxim, therefore, holds—Keep well. See that those corpuscles of the blood whose function it is to destroy the germs of disease are strong and active, then no malady has a chance of gaining ground.

Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly vine,
Within our earthly sod;
Most human and yet most Divine,
Thou flower of man and God!

II. DIVINE ENABLING.

1. I have strength for—all things. It is a great word. Some limits, of course, are recognised, as in all things finite. We do not expect "miracles" to be wrought on our behalf, the laws of nature to be suspended.

Streams will not curb their pride,
The just man not to entomb;
Nor lightnings turn aside,
To give his virtues room.

We expect neither miracles in the world without nor a supersession of the laws which determine the growth of character within. God is a God of order, and in grace, as in Providence, never lightly lays aside the order He Himself has established.

Yet it is hard to define "miracles," and it is not for us to draw the boundary line, either of the power or

the goodness of God. "Circumstances," "surroundings," "environment"—all mean the same thing, and if literally pressed, are heathen words. The "things around" are not there by chance, nor fixed by blind fate. True faith in God will not allow that He is mastered by His own order, and we find many things in history and our own lives for which no "laws of nature" will account. The stars in their courses fight for him whom God wills to conquer. One with God is a majority.

But the text does not directly lead us into these difficult regions. It is not the ordering of circumstances without, but the equipping of character within, with which St. Paul is here concerned. Different words for strength are found in the New Testament. One implies violence; another, inherent natural power; another, power in working or energy; another, force relatively estimated; another—the one used here—implies strength as if stored up against coming emergencies. Thus Paul would say, I have strength enough (see Eph. iii. 18) to achieve and bear all things to which I am called of God, because it is held continually in Him who "enables" me for the purpose in question. It is not the shaping of events without, but of the man within; not the removing of difficulties, but the making it possible to surmount them; not altering the course of the world, but altering me; so that, when the old challenge comes, as it does come to each of us every day—world *versus* man—I am able to say to the world, Do what thou wilt, I shall be master.

Maize, I am told, will grow on any soil, provided it has a sufficiently hot sun. Shine, O thou Sun of our life, into our hearts, and vanquish all defects of soil. When a favouring wind blows, a rightly adjusted sail

will carry the vessel on any tack, whatever the tide or current. Blow, O thou breeze of the Divine Spirit, into our hearts, and whatever the cross-currents of our life, carry us whither Thou wouldst have us go. *Da quod jubes*—it is one of Augustine's great sayings—*et jube quod vis*; Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.

We may insist, therefore, on the absoluteness of religious principle. When Paul says "all things," he does not stop to specify cautions, and modifications, and provisos—the roundabout phrases and hampering clauses of a lawyer's deed. He says boldly, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." So Christ speaks continually, and God has His own way of vindicating the words. Religion lays down principles in all their breadth and freedom, and the heart of man knows how to interpret them, without embarrassing the glorious liberty of the truth, or restricting its regal amplitude by mere quillets and quiddities.

2. Then let us apply the principle to the great tasks of personal religion. The preacher can only hint at such applications, which must finally be made by the man himself.

Sometimes the difficulties appear in the form of temptations. God tempts no man, nor is tempted with evil, but keeps His hand on all temptations that we be not pressed above what we are able to bear. God's "way for escape" really means a high road to victory. Christ has shown us in His own temptation how possible it is for man to be "enabled" for all things in the conflict with evil. Satan has found his master; beyond his chain he cannot go; as Luther loved to say, "O Satan, thou art a beaten enemy." The weakest

Christian may say in his conflicts with the Evil One, "I have strength for all things in Him that enableth me."

Sometimes we have to face what are called trials, rather than temptations. In these there is no suggestion of moral evil, but they are often terribly hard to bear; "flesh and blood cannot stand" such things, we say. Exactly, flesh and blood—the frail, earthly, corruptible elements in our nature—cannot bear such pressure. But in the trial of our faith, when the Master of our spirits orders the heating of the furnace, He will not allow the clay vessel to crack, or the fine gold to melt away. In the furnace, heated seven times more than usual, it is possible for the faithful witness to abide without the smell of fire passing on him, when by the side of the sufferer is seen One like unto the Son of God.

Sometimes difficulties arise from our lack of ability. Deficiencies remain, and God calls no man to do what is physically or mentally impossible. But in spiritual things it is hard to say what is impossible. Moses seemed to make out a good case for being excused from duty, but he went on his Divine errand, and in his task for Israel achieved a kind of moral miracle. If the enterprise be our own, as when Peter said, "Bid me come to Thee on the water," the case is different; though, even then, if Christ says "Come," we need not sink or fail. But Paul means that he has strength for all vicissitudes through which God calls him to pass. At Lystra, the being taken for a god and being stoned within an inch of his life—which was harder? At Philippi he has strength both to bear scourging and get the upper hand of the magistrates. At Athens he has strength for all things before the philosophers; at

Corinth among the gay and licentious ; at Rome, when he was before Nero, in the very jaws of the lion, when he could feel the fetid breath of the wild beast hot upon him.

Strength in all emergencies, and not for Paul only. Generation after generation of Christians in humble, commonplace life have proved the truth of these words—like sycamores green upon the edge of the desert, because their roots have travelled far under ground in search of water. What your wilderness may be, through what straits you may have to pass among the “all things,” I do not know. But there is no conceivable issue in all the complexities of Christian life for which you may not be so empowered, invigorated, animated, energised by the indwelling Spirit of God in Christ, that you may say, “I have strength for it and for all things in Him that enableth me.”

3. Apply the principle to church life and the work of the Church in the world. If Christ's Church were but composed of men who could make the language of the text their own! If even ministers and leaders were men of like faith and high experience! How many of us “know how to be abased,” so that, if severe persecution were to come upon the Church, we should be found faithful? How many “know how to abound,” so that, when God gives wealth and prosperity, they are not spoiled by it, do not lose spirituality or suffer any lowering of religious tone? How many have conquered the fear of man, so as to adopt the dauntless language of the well-known hymn, with its tremendous climax—

Give me Thy strength, O God of power;
Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,
Thy faithful witness will I be;
'Tis fixed; I can do all through Thee!

Is our Church to-day prepared to take this motto? Can she face tasks that seem too great and too solemn, trusting to the powers of the larger life? Is she ready to fulfil all duties, to occupy all fields opening up before her, to face all her adversaries, to venture for God against longest odds, when His command is clearly heard? Can she defy obstacles in more than the spirit of the British officer who, when told that a piece of military duty assigned him was impossible, said, "Impossible? Why, I have the order in my pocket!"

It is a kind of stored-up energy that is ours in God, such as you find in a coiled spring, a sealed fountain—power held in leash, such that when it is once released the work is as good as done. I read the other day in a scientific article that "the storage of power is the want of the age." In spiritual things the Church should be a storehouse of accumulated energy, ready for service—a storehouse filled by God Himself. What may not such men accomplish? It is said that Michael Angelo, even at seventy years of age, when filled with the sacred fury of genius, would hew away at the marble of a statue, and accomplish as much in an hour as would occupy two or three ordinary workmen for a day. A man filled with Divine ardour cannot be accounted for by earthly rules. Who shall measure the achievements of a Church filled with men and women who have learned to say, "I have strength for all things in Him that enableth me?"

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

II

The Doxology of the Redeemed Church¹

Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father ; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—REV. i. 5, 6.

IT is not easy to find adequate and appropriate utterance for the supreme moments of life. This is true for the individual and the community alike ; and it is far easier at such times for emotion to find expression in song than in speech ; so that a company of citizens will find vent for patriotic feeling at a time of national triumph by singing the National Anthem, and a company of Christians by singing the Doxology. In supreme moments of sorrow we take refuge in a Litany, with its repeated refrain, Lord have mercy upon us. But the words in and of themselves are apt to be insufficient, and we call in the help of music—

Miserere Domine—

The words are uttered, and they flee.

Beethoven takes them then, those two

Poor bounded words, and makes them new ;

that they may “ roll adown a channel large, the wealth

¹ Ex-President's sermon preached in the Central Hall, Manchester, on Sunday evening, 27th July 1902, in connection with the meeting of the Wesleyan Conference.

Divine they have in charge." Lord have mercy, have mercy upon us!

So it is also with the Jubilates and Magnificats of life. When words fail the devout man, he sings, briefly it may be, earnestly it is sure to be, his *Laus Deo*, Thanks be to God! And Scripture shows him the way. The doxologies of Scripture burst like fountains from the ground, often very unexpectedly. Usually they come at the end of an argument or a prayer; sometimes in the very midst of his reasoning Paul cannot be restrained from an outburst of thanksgiving; occasionally, as here, one is found in the very opening of a book which is to introduce us to the doxologies of the skies. Their character varies with their theme. Sometimes they are addressed to the Creator, sometimes to the Preserver, more frequently to the Redeemer of men. Sometimes the apostle will praise the inexhaustible resources of grace, as in Ephesians iii. 20, 21; sometimes the guardian care that can save to the uttermost, as in Jude 24, 25; sometimes it is the hidden rather than the revealed glories of God that evoke rapture—"the King Eternal, incorruptible, invisible," Him "who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to Him be honour and power eternal!" So the Church has chanted for centuries her *Gloria Patri*, using words truly scriptural in spirit, though not in letter, and generations have re-echoed, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Before us now is the Doxology of the Redeemed Church. John is writing to the seven churches of Asia, representative of all churches in all time. He salutes them in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit,

though employing unusual phraseology, coined in his own mint and very precious. While setting forth the work and glory of Christ as "the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth," he can contain himself no longer. He cannot deliver his message till he has relieved his heart, and he pours forth as from a fountain of thanksgiving aspiring heavenward the anthem of the Church of the redeemed below—"Unto Him that loveth us!"

On an occasion like the present, what can we do better than remember what God in Christ has done for us, what He has made us and desires yet more fully to accomplish in us, and give Him thanks accordingly? An utterance like this gathers up so many experiences in itself, it implies so much, reminds us of so much, suggests so much. In the story of the Roman Empire we read of the banquet in which, because the rarest wines were not costly enough, the guests drank from goblets in which priceless pearls had been dissolved. But how richly filled is the chalice containing the thanksgivings of saints, forgiven, cleansed, and fitted for lofty service; and who can estimate the significance of the praises they offer to their Saviour for His redeeming grace? And best of all, such a text, while reminding us of our sins and our redemption, our trials and deliverances, our evil and its mastery, our low estate and the rank to which Christ has raised us, leads entirely away from self and fastens all our attention on another Figure—to Him be glory for ever!

I. FIRST WE PRAISE LOVE, THE SOURCE.

1. It is the habit of our time to investigate origins. Physical science goes as far back as she can, but finds

it necessary to fall back on philosophy, which goes farther; while the best philosophy recognises that religion can plumb the depths she cannot sound. It is easier to ask whence came this universe with its beauty, order, variety, and fertility of life, than to get an answer. Man has attributed the Cosmos in turn to chance, law, fate, matter, and unconscious will, and now seems disposed to rest in the order itself as self-sufficing—a very refuge of despair. For us the old-fashioned answer has not yet been surpassed—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But when the too bold question is further pressed, Why did God create? the answer, so far as we can hear it from those inconceivable distances, is found, not in Power, not in Wisdom, but in Love. Power and Wisdom have been present from the first, assuredly; but the primal source in creation is not so much the Mind of the Omniscient or the Power of the Omnipotent, as the heart of love in the Eternal Father of all. God so loved the world as once to bring its glories into being, and ever since by perpetual process of evolution to cause glories yet more glorious to shine out of the steadily vanishing primeval darkness.

But the text does not refer to creation. It supposes a world, not of order but of disorder, full of the mischief and the misery which all departure from heaven's first law must bring. If in the first creation we trace all up to Love as primal fount and source, what shall we say of the second creation? As we read the story of Redemption and watch the process of world-renewal, we gaze in wonder alike at methods and ends and the mode in which all things work together for the restoration of those who deserved to be left to the consequences of their own disobedience and evil-doing. When we turn to Redemption, there is

assuredly only one answer possible to the question Whence, and Why? The primal source is Love Divine, all loves excelling. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," that the world through Him might be saved.

2. Then, since all springs from love, it is well for us constantly to go back in thought to that beginning, and rest there. *Omnia exeunt in mysterium*, says Sir Thomas Browne; all things issue in mystery. But also all things issue from mystery. By which we mean not the incomprehensible, but the all-comprehending; not the unintelligible, but the self-sufficing and self-explaining; not the blackness of darkness, but the blaze of truth dark with excess of light.

Do not try to go behind Divine love as a cause; you cannot. In Deuteronomy (vii. 7) Israel is told that Jehovah loved His people—because He loved them. The Christian hymn says the same thing. "He hath loved, He hath loved us, we cannot tell why; He hath loved, He hath loved us because He would love." The Jews were chosen, not because of their numbers, not because of their warlike virtues, not because of their "religious instincts" or amenability to religious teaching, but because God loved them. A Syrian ready to perish was their father, but God made of them a nation to whom all the world has been and still is indebted. That does not mean that Divine love is irrational, arbitrary, capricious; but it does mean that for personal beings love is a primary fact, a source, a fountain, an ultimate explanation, beyond which it is well not to strive to pass. Especially the unworthy, the wayward, and the evil; all they can do is to sing—

Who for me vouchsafed to die,
Loves me still—I know not why!

There I stand, there I rest; I seek to go no farther. I ask no more questions, lost in wonder, love, and praise!

3. Note the present tense of R.V., "unto Him that loveth us," instead of the past tense "loved" in A.V. The past tense expresses a blessed truth, but "loveth" includes all—past, present, and future; it is a timeless word, bringing with it fresh breezes from across the ocean of eternity. It is not a single act that is here indicated, but a state abiding— $\tau\hat{\omega}$ ἀγαπῶντι—"Thou everlasting Lover of our unworthy race!"

The gospel according to the Apocalypse, which is given in this verse, is the same that was from the beginning. In Scripture at first there are only hints and hopes, a *protangelium*, primal promise spoken in the Garden as soon as the need for redemption began; a promise becoming fuller and more explicit as time proceeded, foreshadowed in outline to Abraham as he stood by the altar on Mount Moriah, mystically sketched in ceremonial lines for those who gathered round the tabernacle in the wilderness, more richly and completely filled in in the Temple worship. The colours deepen and the passion grows in the rapt utterances of the prophets and the glowing anticipations of the psalms; whilst in the Gospels there shines resplendent *the* Life, *the* Death, and the Resurrection which explained and glorified both. The meaning of that life and death of Christ for man's salvation is more fully elaborated in Acts and Epistles, whilst in the last book of the Bible it passes into the music of the heavenly places; but the strain is the same, Unto Him that loveth us!

The same throughout half the ages—unexhausted, inexhaustible; unwearying, unwavering. Before the

fulness of the times came this love was but partially understood, though it is a Jewish voice that repeats a score of times in a score of verses a truth which all Christians have not yet learned to grasp—"His mercy endureth for ever." The Psalmist had not understood the scope of his own utterance as John the evangelist understood it when he wrote, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end," to the uttermost. Nor could even the apostle of love understand the full meaning of that great saying as we can see it now; nor can we understand it now as we shall understand it by and by. But there is One who is the Alpha of love, whom we praise as the source, the fount, the spring of all; we praise Him also as the Omega of love, the last as He was the first, the end, the goal, unto whom as well as from whom are all things, in whose praise it was never too early and never will be too late to sing, "Unto Him that loveth us!"

4. As much as this we may fairly say is included in the timeless present tense of our text, but the emphasis doubtless lies upon the realisation of the truth that God loves us *now*. It is for every generation to repeat the words, "Unto Him that loveth us," in tones determined by its own experiences, difficulties, needs, and hopes.

To Him that loveth us, says John—if we may identify the beloved disciple with the author of the Apocalypse—the Saviour who has mastered the vehement spirit of the disciple who desired the best place in the kingdom, and who would have called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan village, making him content now to tarry till his Master comes, and exhort the brethren to love one another. To Him that loveth us, says

John to the seven churches of Asia: Ephesus, though she had left her own first love; Sardis, who had a name to live, but was dead; Laodicea, neither cold nor hot, whose lukewarmness excites loathing, but to whom the message comes, "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten," and still there stands One knocking at the door, if perchance it may be opened to receive the heavenly guest, who will spread the heavenly banquet once again. "To Him that loveth us," the word might have been uttered, was in substance uttered many times, by Ignatius and Polycarp, by Tertullian and Augustine, by martyrs and confessors, by devoted monks and nuns and yet more devoted servants of God living in the midst of a cold and careless world, but keeping the holy fire burning on the altar, in spite of green wood, damp fuel, and drenching rains. "To Him that loveth us," sang Luther the reformer and, not less sincerely or earnestly, Xavier the Jesuit missionary; and in the same chorus join Borromeo and Fénelon, saints of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the persecuted Huguenot and Camisard and Covenanter. "Jesu, lover of my soul," sings Charles Wesley, and another voice in perfect tune with his cries, "Oh for this love let rocks and hills their lasting silence break!" while a still later singer joins all types of congregations in the words, "The King of Love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never!"

It is for us also to take our part in this doxology. The truth is to be afresh realised for present need. The sinner who has never understood the meaning of these words may understand them now, if he will open his heart to receive that well-nigh incredible truth, "God loves me," and that in Christ by the Spirit He is present now, to show how Divine love can pardon,

cleanse, and save. The Christian who is conscious of coldness and unfaithfulness, the freshness of whose early affection has glided imperceptibly into a formalism which may remove him farther from salvation than the very sinner in his sins, may prove afresh the power of love to melt the apathy and selfishness of the elder brother, as well as to receive and restore the wandering prodigal. He has loved us, He will love us; but the doxology is to Him who loves us now. And that which would best please the Saviour who, all unseen, is present here with us this night, and listening to the silent words going up from all hearts, would be a fresh act of loving devotion arising from a fresh realisation of the truth that He loves us *now*.

II. NEXT WE CELEBRATE THE MIGHT OF THE SACRIFICE WITH WHICH LOVE HAS REDEEMED US.

The tense is changed in the second clause, "who loosed us from our sins by His blood," and represents a definite *act* of grace. As we rejoice in the continuity, the glorious eternal present, of the word "loveth," so we rejoice in the definite, concrete, historical character of the word "loosed." The eternity of love is august, impressive, but we creatures of a day dwell in time. And He, the Eternal, has entered into time, contracted to a span, shrunk within our limits and left upon the history of man a mark—such a mark as can never be effaced. Our doxology recalls that act and fastens upon it as the chief embodiment and manifestation of a love without beginning and without end; and while dwelling upon the splendour and might of that redeeming sacrifice, the singers throughout this whole book

almost break the strings of the harp of language, in the energy of their adoring praise.

1. This clause draws attention to *sins*. No doxology is worth much in a world like ours if it contains no reference to this fundamental fact of human life. This fact is known by many names, for the theological word "sin" is not admitted by all. It may be described as a breach of order, as a missing of the mark, as a yielding to the sensuous part of our nature, as frailty, as imperfection, or any other euphemism men care to employ. But the reason why many object to the word "sin" is the very reason which makes it the best word to describe the fact. Sin is a spiritual word, and brings out the spiritual relations of the fact in question. It points out that there is something radically wrong in human spirits in their relation to the great Father of spirits, and any way of regarding the radical evil of human nature which takes no cognisance of this fails to reach the real root of the difficulty. If sin be nothing more than sensuousness, it is enough to advise men to cultivate the higher part of their nature; if it is but frailty, they may be counselled to strengthen the will; if a man's life be out of gear or in disorder, he may study the map of life again and reform. But man cannot remedy his own nature by considering his own nature alone; cannot attune his own spirit except by bringing it into harmony with the will and nature of Him in whom all spirits live and have their being. And it is He who deigns to enter into such gracious relation with us as to take upon Himself the burden of remedying the evil which we in our disobedience have caused.

2. This work is described by two different words in A.V. and R.V.—"washed" and "loosed." These are

two figures for one fact. There is but the difference of a single letter in the Greek, and not a letter of difference in the reality, though the point of view differs. The one word regards sin as defilement, the other as bondage. The one thanksgiving rejoices in our being purified, the other in our being freed. The same Divine act accomplishes both ends; and at one time we may rejoice more in the thought that the old foul self may be made clean, at another in the delightful consciousness that our chains are snapped, the dungeon walls broken down, and the slave emancipated for ever. The two ideas are combined in a well-known incident in Jeremiah's life, when he was tied with cords and let down into a fetid dungeon, "and in the dungeon there was no water but mire, so that Jeremiah sunk in the mire." We know both consequences of sin only too well. When the foul nature of sin disgusts us, we long to be whiter than snow; when the thralldom of evil galls, we cry out for deliverance. In neither case need we cry out in vain.

3. But the emphasis in the text as we have it lies upon deliverance from bondage. Every sinner is bound. Partly in relation to

Law.—The commandments "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" are not arbitrary edicts; they are bound up with the very constitution of the world and man. All who violate these laws come into collision with the adamantine bands which hold the universe in its place and enable all things to cohere in order. He who breaks away from these finds hands stronger than triple brass laid upon him, and from these he cannot escape.

The Powers of Evil.—We know little of the devil and his angels, but there is an adversary of man who is busy, representative of the powers of darkness in the

universe, and he does not easily let go those who have yielded themselves to his will. He is not the ruler of the universe, but he is ruler of the darkness of this world, and his slaves are *bound*!

Evil Habit.—We need not go outside ourselves to find the truth of Christ's words that he who commits sin is the bond-slave of sin. From these cruel fetters, self-forged, man has been vainly trying to deliver himself for these thousands of years. He finds them now softer than silk, now tougher than steel; but silk or steel, they eat into the flesh till a man can as soon rid himself of his own identity as of these.

Haunting Fear.—Not superstition, not empty terrors, but those direst of all fears which concern the time when the sinner will have to face realities. Man fears death, not so much because of what it is in itself, but because of what may come after, and because in any case it brings him face to face with the supreme realities of existence. Hence springs that fear of death which causes many to be "all their lifetime subject to bondage."

4. Who shall loose these bands? The doxology is addressed to Him who hath loosed them, and it is said "by His blood." There is a certain fastidiousness of our time which shrinks from this reference to "blood," when, for example, it is dwelt upon in Christian hymns; but the expression is scriptural, and an æsthetic shrinking from its use is not a good sign in religion. The word puts vividly before us the spiritual power which resides in the sacrifice of the death of Christ; and if the deliverance is to be real, we must thoroughly understand the might of the atoning "blood," of that sacrifice with which Love has redeemed us.

The teaching of Scripture is that the death of Christ

was necessary for the remission of man's sin. The explanation of that necessity may be beyond us; a full explanation is certainly beyond our powers at present. But not only is the fact made clear in Scripture, the reasons are not obscurely shadowed forth. And we are taught that without such death God could not Himself righteously forgive sin, and that such bands as have been described could not be loosed, because the chief bondage which holds an unforgiven sinner under the wrath of a holy God cannot be relaxed by mere fiat, by the single word, Go free! It is not for me now to attempt to unfold the mystery of the Atonement. But one thing the text emphasises, that its root is in love. It is not that the Father is angry and the Son steps in to save us from His wrath, as if there could be schism in the Godhead. It is, God so loved the world that He gave His Son to save it, and Christ so loved the world that He loosed the bands of its sins by His blood.

But without shedding of blood was no remission under the Jewish law, and without the death of the Cross is no redemption for a sinful world. A Saviour who stopped short of death would have lacked the power to loose man from sin, either in relation to God or to the powers of evil or to his own moral and spiritual constitution. A teacher, a healer, a miracle-worker, a prophet, a martyr—all these are well, but none of them is a Saviour. This Paul showed, indirectly but very powerfully, in his indignant question, Was Paul crucified for you? He who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, tasted death for every man. He bare our sins in His body on the tree, and obtained eternal redemption for us; God in Christ doing all that needed to be done in order that He might righteously forgive.

Hence the gospel! Hence the message to all who are unsaved here to-night, that pardon may be theirs here and now, if they trust God's mercy as shown in the death of Christ on their behalf. By His stripes we are healed; by His death we live. Some of the great artists of the Crucifixion have sought to set this forth by painting the cross as reaching into the skies, exercising a cosmic influence for the world upon which its foot rests, whilst its top touches and moves the very heavens. There is such a painting by Luino at Lugano, and another by Guido Reni at Rome. The head of the suffering Christ in the latter is often reproduced, but the whole of the picture should be seen to understand the artist's thought. And so the power of the Cross touches the burden of sin which we sinners carry on our shoulders at a thousand points, loosening it at every one and so causing it to fall away from our shoulders in the way Bunyan describes. Freed from condemnation in the sight of God, we are freed altogether: it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? We are freed from the bondage of law, from the thralldom of the devil, from the power of evil habit, from the fear of death and that which follows after death.

Neither passion nor pride
Thy cross can abide,
But melt in the fountain that streams from Thy side.

So it is in individual life, and so in human history; "the cross leads generations on," because it and it alone has the power to redeem from the bondage of sin. It alone can fill human hearts with the joy that accompanies the doxology to Him that "loosed us from our sins in His own blood!"

III. NEXT WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE UNSPEAKABLE DIGNITY TO WHICH LOVE RAISES US.

Divine Love finds the sinner in a dungeon and raises him to a throne; it finds him in the mire and puts upon him not only clean but sacred robes. When love lifts, it is never satisfied till it has placed the beloved on its own level and made the object of affection like itself. Such is the way of grace, and the text illustrates it. "He hath made us to be a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father."

Another variation between A.V. and R.V. appears here. Nowhere else do we find Christ's followers called "kings" as in A.V., but other passages of Scripture might almost justify the expression. In Exodus xix. 6 Israel is described as "a kingdom of priests," and in 1 Peter ii. 9 Christians are styled "a royal priesthood." Elsewhere in this book (v. 10) the redeemed saints are said to be made "unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." There is only one King in this kingdom, only one High Priest in this temple. Yet the disciples are to be as their Master, in their order and measure; if they are not kings, they are royal, they are themselves a kingdom, and are to exercise dominion in their own realms, yet after the fashion of no earthly sovereignty, whilst every believer is to be a priest unto God, after the fashion of no Aaronic or ethnic priesthood.

Here is dignity indeed; and we are reminded that the redemption which Christ has wrought out for us is not a mere deliverance from thralldom, not a mere bestowal of ease or happiness, but a call to high privilege, a preparation for the accomplishment of a great work, the establishment of a new order in which

a new and worthy Israel shall be what the old Israel never succeeded in being, a royal priesthood for the hallowing of the Divine name and the maintenance of His kingdom in the earth.

Without very closely analysing the figurative language here used, we may find in the phrase "a kingdom and priests" some suggestions as to the position to which Love would raise us, in character, power, and influence.

1. *Character*.—When Pyrrhus was introduced to the plain, simple citizens who constituted the Roman senate in early times, he said, "I have seen an assembly of kings." Royal state is unfortunately not always accompanied by royal virtues, but there are certain qualities which we regard as kingly: the lips that never lie; the strong hand that never oppresses, but maintains right at all costs; the lion heart, brave in defence of the weak and downtrodden; the magnanimity which scorns all sordid motives and all petty and unworthy aims. Are Christians like their King, type and pattern of the truly regal? Saul was in stature head and shoulders above his fellows, and Christ asked his disciples, What do ye more than others? To love them that love us and give that we may receive as much again, and help forward others that we may be helped forward in return, are not characteristics which lift a man above the moral level of ordinary humanity or mark him out as a subject of Christ's kingdom. And the text reminds us that Christ did not love us and loose us from our sins by His blood that we might sink back into the convenient habits of those who practise the easy virtues and tread the level way and live the decent, harmless life of men who do not dare to climb, though they do not wish to fall. Redeeming power has been exerted that a new standard may be

maintained, a new pattern exhibited, a new order with new human leaders established in that kingdom of which Christ is the One Ruler, while every subject is to bear the impress of the King.

2. *Power*.—As God's vicegerents we may sit on a throne, wear a crown, hold a sceptre, or at least may be honoured citizens in a Divine Commonwealth. But what mockery is such a status if we have no power! I have read in an account of one of the South Sea Islands of a certain Paititi, the *gilded* King, who was smeared with gum from head to foot and had gold-dust blown over him, that at least he might have the golden semblance of royalty. Is that a farce which only raises a smile? It is only too apt an illustration of earthly kingship as it has been known in history, and terribly appropriate to describe the condition of many Christians. How many of these reign, but do not govern?

Think of the Christian's lofty name, titles, profession, and privileges, and contrast these with the reality with which we are sadly familiar—men trembling with fear, tossed by doubt, tormented by anxiety, rent by passion. Why should the "children of a King" be the sport of every wind of temptation, playthings for the powers of evil? It is theirs to reign in the sense of exercising sovereign power over the lower parts of their own nature. As in Dante it is said of the soul prepared to leave purgatory, *Te sopra te corono è mitrio*, "I invest thee then with crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself." Power over sin, over temptation, and to some extent over circumstances, is given to the man whom Divine Love has redeemed and made worthy of a place in the new kingdom. Our thanksgiving may, in reminding us of our true dignity, at the same time rebuke us for

unfaithfulness and encourage us to realise to the full what our Lord is prepared to make us.

3. *Influence*.—The union of the kingly with the priestly character and power is rare indeed. It indicates to us that in Christ's service true dignity depends on character, and character on consecration. Combined with royal nobility and generosity in the Christian is the solemnly glad, the lofty and devoted character of a man who is consecrated as a priest unto God; and this combination can only be understood by "considering Christ"—as the writer of "Hebrews" describes it—who is Himself our King and Priest for ever.

Man is sometimes spoken of as a priest in relation to nature; as George Herbert puts it—

Man is the world's high priest, he doth present
The sacrifice for all, while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
Such as streams use that fall and winds that blow.

But this is a poet's graceful fancy. The truth of the text lies in the relation of the Christian to God and his fellow-men. There is no human priest in Christianity to come between God and any single human heart; the only Mediator is He who is Son of God and Son of Man, a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Yet every Christian is to be a priest unto God, as himself offering spiritual sacrifices and helping to interpret God-in-Christ to man and to bring men to the God and Father whom he has learned to love and serve. Much is said, and rightly said, against the spirit of sacerdotalism which is so prevalent in the Christian Church and the intolerable assumptions of men who claim to enforce the duty of confession of

sin to themselves, to pronounce absolution, to offer the only valid sacrifice of the mass, and in various ways to come between God and the individual soul and make themselves necessary channels of salvation. But one reason why this sacerdotalism is as potent as it is in this country and so constantly recurring a phenomenon in the history of the Church is because Christian laymen and ministers who do not believe in a sacerdotal caste come short of their own prerogative and duty to be "priests unto God."

On this we must not now enlarge. But a wonderful picture of what a priest should be is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as one "who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." A Christian priest is a man whose heart has been touched by Christ to see the world somewhat as He sees it, to hate the sin and love the sinner, to be touched with the feeling of the infirmities of those who are under the bondage of sin and have not learned the one method of deliverance. He hears Christ say, Lovest thou Me? Then tend My sheep and be My under shepherd. Lovest thou Me? Then seek to win the wanderers and rebels who belong to My kingdom though they will not own My authority. Lovest thou Me? Then in the spirit of Him who gave Himself as the one sacrifice for sins for ever, be My priest always and everywhere, and help to bring to God and My Father those who, like thyself, have been redeemed with My precious blood.

If the Church as she thankfully sings her doxology would but faithfully enter on the fulness of her inheritance!

IV. CHIEFLY WE ADORE HIM WHO IS ORIGIN, CENTRE,
AND GOAL OF ALL.

Is it said that a doxology makes an unpractical text, suggests a sermon without an application? Nothing could be farther from the truth, if as we utter it we mean what we say or sing. To Him who has done so much for us, says the text, be what is surely His due—"the glory and the dominion for ever."

Glory means acknowledged excellence of character. Do we give to Christ the glory that is His due, and so confess Him before men that they may rejoice to know and obey Him and learn to glorify Him too?

Dominion implies a real, dominating, subjugating, transforming influence. Have we given to Christ that supreme dominion in our lives without which He cannot fully work in us and through us?

If we sing, do we also labour to this end? Of what use are our Glorias, unless we are doing what in us lies to bring about the consummation which is the theme of our anthems? *The* glory and *the* dominion means that which is due to such a Saviour, that which belongs to Him for what He is and what He has done; the dominion and glory which belong to an everlasting Lover of sinful souls; which belong to a triumphantly accomplished redemption, realised through uttermost self-sacrifice; which belong to the perpetually manifested power of elevating, purifying, and transforming a ruined world. What glory is glorious enough, what dominion is complete enough, for such a Saviour as this?

Therefore to Him whose kingdom is founded in love, is maintained and cemented by love, and will be perfected in the supremacy of love, to Him be the glory and the dominion now and for ever, unto the ages of the ages, till the ages themselves be no more. Amen.

III

Christ's Gift to His Church¹

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—It is my pleasant duty to congratulate you on having successfully passed through the several stages of ministerial probation, and on having been to-day “received into full connexion” with the brotherhood of the Wesleyan Methodist ministry. The service of this morning will have been to you full of solemn gladness. Your “ordination” does not mean that you have received from the hands of the President and other Presbyters of our Church a deposit of transmitted grace, though we fully believe that the united prayers offered on your behalf have been heard and will be answered. It means that you are now fully recognised as men whom we believe to have been called by God for the work of His ministry; that you have been tried in many ways and found faithful; that you have received full authority to “preach the word and minister the Sacraments in the congregation”; and that you are appointed by the full power of the Christian community known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church to engage in this work to your lives’ end. In the service of this morning certain ministers have taken part as representing the whole of our ministry; and

¹ Charge to newly ordained ministers, delivered in Gravel Lane Chapel, Manchester, 4th August 1902.

the congregation here present represents the great company of Wesleyan Methodists in all parts of the world, by whom you are now acknowledged as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ to them and to all mankind.

And now you stand in the sight of God and this congregation as Christian knights, who, after long and sacred vigil, have first put on their full armour; as Christian heralds fully commissioned with the high message of our King. May the God who through His servants has conferred upon you this high trust make you courageous and earnest messengers, brave and loyal soldiers in that holy warfare, from which you will receive no discharge till your Lord and ours shall call you home!

There is only one subject that can occupy the attention of this great congregation at this moment. If we could all gain a fresh glimpse of what is meant by the "ministry" to which these our brethren have been consecrated, it would indeed be like a sight of the Delectable Mountains and the beautiful feet of those who traverse them and bring glad tidings down their illumined slopes. "Every high crisis in our lives," says Dr. Hort, in one of his too rare ordination addresses, "is, or ought to be, as the lifting of a veil, perhaps the lifting of many veils." There are many veils which need to be lifted in our religious life, veils which have gathered over our eyes in relation to sacred things, through our over-familiar, thoughtless, and mechanical way of handling them. These veils are apt to dim the spiritual vision alike of ministers and people. How can we use an opportunity like this better than by seeking for the spirit of revelation, that we may be

enabled to discern more fully the high significance, the deep spiritual import of a department of Christian service which we are all too apt to think we perfectly understand?

What is the Christian ministry? What is its origin, scope, significance, and end? For an answer to these questions let us turn to certain well-known words of St. Paul—a standard utterance on this great theme.

And He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 11, 12.

These words tell us that the Christian ministry is

(1) A gift of Christ to His Church;

(2) to be employed in all its various offices and functions;

(3) for the promotion of the loftiest conceivable end; and this end is the perfect realisation of Christ's ideal for the individual, the Church, and all mankind, for the achievement of His own consummate likeness in each and in all. What a theme to be handled in an hour! Yet if the Holy Spirit give us but a momentary unveiling of its splendours, we may walk in its light till travelling days are done.

I. THE MINISTRY IS A GIFT OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

1. In this passage "He gave" means "Christ gave." In 1 Corinthians xii. we read "God set" in His Church apostles and the rest; also in the same chapter we are

told that the actual worker is "one and the same Spirit, dividing to each severally as He will." God, Christ, Spirit—these three are one. No mode of speech concerning the three Persons in the Trinity must ever mar the unity of the Godhead. God-in-Christ-by-the-Spirit is the Giver of all good gifts to men, and of this high boon of men to the Church.

But in this paragraph it is the ascended Christ who bestows. The 68th Psalm furnishes the form for the description. It represents a Conqueror, triumphant over his foes, gathering great spoil, and returning to his capital laden with good things, which he distributes as largesse to his soldiers. In this case a Captain who has fought and won a battle alone; single-handed against sin and death and hell, descending to the lowest depths of pain and humiliation and overthrow, that He might reign indeed—Lord of heaven, and filling all things with His Divine Presence, receiving glory yonder, but His heart still yearning over those for whom He bled and died.

See, He lifts His hands above,
See, He shows the prints of love;
Hark, His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below!

The reason is clear. It is impossible for these gifts to be bestowed till that victory is won. There are no glad tidings to deliver, no heralds to proclaim them, till the cross has been endured, the bands of the grave burst, the stone rolled away from the tomb, and the gates of heaven opened with shouting to receive the Victor home. No outpouring of the Holy Spirit, no gracious work of that Spirit in founding a Church and fitting men for service in it, till the Son of God

has ascended on high, led captivity captive, and taken His place above, that He might fill all things.

2. Then it was that He gave gifts to His Church. But what gifts? Not of human choice, not bestowed after human fashion. Not power to crush opponents, not wealth to buy and sway the world, not authority to awe the rebellious, not influence that might make every task and enterprise easy. The first gift of Christ to His Church is — *men*. All that He Himself had done in the days of His flesh towards forming a Church was to prepare His disciples; the training of the Twelve was Christ's way of beginning to build His Ecclesia. And now that He is taken from the head of His followers, and they are left to battle with the world, after the outpouring of the Spirit to inaugurate the new era, we read that Christ gave gifts to men, and it is *men* whom He gives. Men fitted to teach, to lead, to help, to guide; men prepared to carry a message, men filled with His own Spirit, men who should represent Him, and carry on the work of Him who was the Saviour of man because He was the Son of Man. God's method of saving man by man is carried out to the end.

The phrase "a gift to the Church" is a lofty one. We can well understand its meaning when applied to the great men of the Church. What greater gift could even Christ bestow than a Peter, a Paul, a John, the apostles of hope, and faith, and love, the apostles of Jews, of Gentiles, of humanity; a Stephen, "full of grace and power"; a Barnabas, son of consolation; an Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures; a Chrysostom, with his golden eloquence; an Athanasius, with his dauntless zeal; an Augustine, great as an ecclesiastic and greater as a divine; Luther, the earth-shaker, and

Calvin, the thinker and statesman; Hooker, Taylor, Barrow; Wesley, Whitefield, Fletcher; Spurgeon, Moody, Dale; David Hill, William Arthur, William F. Moulton—how long is the roll of illustrious names, how various these priceless gifts of Christ; men whose value can never be estimated, and whose influence can never perish!

3. But it may well seem otherwise when we pass to lesser men and think of the mediocre, the insignificant, the commonplace. This great phrase of our text is not to be lightly used. There have been times in the history of the Church when the ranks of its ministry have been thronged with the careless and the worldly; times when men have been put into the priest's office for a morsel of bread; times when the selfish and ambitious have abused their position by arrogant priestly claims, lording it over God's heritage, not feeding the flock. Men who have dared to

Creep and intrude and climb into the fold . . .
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
. . . The hungry sheep look up and are not fed!

Alas that the unworthy should ever have crept within the sacred precincts, that the holy places should ever be trodden by the self-indulgent and profane, that men should ever have disgraced a holy calling by hypocrisy and polluted the shrines of the temple by evil practices that brought contempt on the profession of religion! And—almost as terrible and much more common—when no open charge could be brought against unworthy ministers, so languid and perfunctory has often been their service that the Church would

have been a gainer if they could have been instantly banished from their office as men neither cold nor hot, salt fit neither for the land nor yet for the dunghill—"to God and to God's foes displeasing."

But it is with the ideal we have to do, an ideal often splendidly realised. The true man, called of God, loyal to Christ, filled with the Spirit and devoted to his work—however moderate his abilities, however scanty his gifts and humble his attainments—such a man placed in the ministry by Christ Himself is a gift indeed. Who can say how valuable is the window of a human spirit if it be transparent enough for the light of God to shine through it? Of a trumpet clear and resonant enough for the Spirit of Truth to use it, make it speak to the armed throng, and rally them to the battle? Of a messenger of such simplicity of heart, such devotion of spirit, such a glow of love to God and man that whoever hears him preach shall say, Hush, the Saviour is speaking? What we call gifts of mind are, doubtless, of high importance. Gifts of bodily presence, of voice, of health, of vigour; gifts of sympathy, kindness, power of personal attachment; gifts of utterance to attract and interest, of logic to convince, of eloquence to sway and win—what sane man would despise any of these? And by God's grace all of us have some faculties like these to lay upon the altar that sanctifies the gift. But the real gift which Christ bestows upon the Church is that of a true *Man*, one whom God has called, whom Christ has stamped with His own impress, and whom the Spirit can use for the highest service man has ever known.

4. No one but God-in-Christ can bestow this gift. Men cannot give themselves. They must, of course, be willing to be given, but mere willing is not enough.

To "take orders," to "enter the sacred profession," to "begin to preach"—these are but human phrases, describing a process which may begin and end with man; cold incense giving forth no perfume; dead, unconsecrated sacrifices, with no fire from heaven to kindle a sweet-smelling savour. "How can they preach, except they be sent?" No man taketh this office upon himself, and no Church can bestow it by searching among likely candidates, by issuing broadcast invitations, by raising the standard of education, by offering higher stipends—save the mark!—to tempt men of influence and ability. "*He* gave gifts to men." He only can give them!

Are you a gift of Christ to His Church? It is a searching question. None of us would think highly of himself as of any special value, while all hope to be of some general use. But that is not the point here. The question is, Has Christ given us who are ministers to this ministry? Does our ultimate reliance rest on any external circumstances or invitations or qualifications, or rather on this, that Christ has laid hold on us for purposes not our own, and we follow after, that we may apprehend that for which He apprehended us?

You, my young brethren, have answered that you have been inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to undertake this work. Your convictions have been confirmed by the assurances of friends, by providential openings, by the call of the Church, by fruit given you of your labours—but nothing can compensate for the absence of Divine afflatus, the inward prompting, urging, well-nigh irresistible constraining of the Spirit of Christ Himself. He knows who can serve Him, and how. He may take an Amos from his herds and his sycamore fruit and send him to the King's court, or may bend a

Saul of Tarsus to preach the despised Nazarene. He may make a brilliant scholar glad to offer his highest powers in such a service, or He may scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts and exalt the humble and meek. But Christ knows who can serve Him, and we do not; and the only security for a truly gospel ministry is that that which was true at the beginning shall hold all through history—"He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers."

5. When Christ thus gives, He knows how to fit and prepare men for every task He appoints. The fitting is a part of the giving. Does He give some to be apostles? He takes care that they be men who have seen the Master, companied with Him, heard His words and seen His works, that they should be witnesses of His passion, death, and resurrection, fit in every way to be foundation-stones in His temple on earth. Does He give some to be prophets? He makes known to them His own secrets and gives them burning words in which to utter them. Does He give evangelists? Then be certain that their lips have been touched with the live coal from the altar; just as the teachers whom He sends are taught by Him to teach and the pastors whom the Great Shepherd gives to His church are fit—and they alone—to feed and tend His lambs and sheep, the flock which He has purchased with His own blood.

Do not be afraid as to your own fitness, since you are sure that Christ has sent you. No one can say what a man will become when Christ takes him in hand. "A marvellous fashion of teaching He hath." Think of Peter; of what essentially human clay did Christ mould and shape a Divine vase! Of John—

now anxious to call down fire to consume the Samaritan village, now glowing with seraphic fires of love which have kindled generations with their beneficent ardours. Of Thomas—changed from the hesitating and distrustful sceptic into the confessor of a new faith—"my Lord and my God!" Recall for your encouragement the wonderful workmanship of this Divine Artist when He fashions tools for His own use—a William Carey, a John Hunt, a Gideon Ouseley, as well as a Henry Martyn or a Coleridge Patteson.

Let Him fit you. Do not hinder His work. He may put you into the furnace of pain heated sevenfold, or allow you to be tested by the searching winds of doubt. He may probe your very soul by a thrice-plied question concerning your love to Him, as one ground of confidence after another fails you, one disappointment after another daunts and baffles you. He may for a time leave you in the very Valley of the Shadow of Death, till you cry, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"; or He may let the sunshine of success and prosperity shine on you, to draw out your gifts and graces and try the simplicity and thoroughness of your allegiance. But let that Divine grace which first called you, and which alone can fit you for this service and maintain you in it, do its own work. Leave it room and opportunity to work. Fear self and the world; fear routine and the mechanical performance of duty; fear cant and hypocrisy and unreality, mere receiving by tradition and learning by rote. Keep the skylights of the soul clear; kneel often with your window open and your face towards the Jerusalem which is above, which is free and the mother of us all; prize those moments when your door is closed and the world shut out, and time and room are given for the Christ who

gave you to the Church to make you fit to serve Him in it. Do not silence other voices in your soul simply to follow your own fancies, and imagine them to be original and striking and impressive; but let God speak, let Christ guide, let the Spirit mould and fashion; and then—whether your abilities are great or small, your education complete or scanty, your attainments few or many—the Church and the world will praise God that ever you became a minister, because you are so clearly one of Christ's gifts to His own people for the carrying on of His own work in His own world.

6. Of course this does not imply that we are not to labour for our own perfecting. The work will never be done else. Except the Lord build the house, man cannot build it; but except man build the house, the Lord will not build it. This is work at which each of us may well "toil terribly." Ambition concerning it is in place; not that we may get, but that we may give. Ambition that in us there may be the very best for Christ to give to others through us—that the high phrase of this text be not fraught with bitter irony: "So and so is a gift of Christ to His Church."

What steps you should take to prepare and improve your powers I do not propose even to indicate. You are not novices in this matter, nor is this the time or place for details. But as a high ideal may shape a whole life, though it never be realised, so it may influence all yours, my brethren, if from this outset of your full ministry you take with you the inspiring conception of this text. That you, that I, should be a gift of Christ worth the having, worth the fashioning, worth the giving, worth the receiving! Ah, to be a cup, a vase, meet for the Master's use! A vessel

earthen, it is true, but clean and ready, holding good measure, filled with the water of life for thirsty souls !
"Heaven soon sets right all other matters."

II. TO BE EMPLOYED IN ALL ITS VARIED OFFICES AND FUNCTIONS.

In 1 Corinthians xii. instead of "gave" we read "set" or "appointed"; and a comparison of the two lists of ministers is instructive. Apostles come first in both; prophets next in both; teachers are mentioned in both; but instead of the evangelists or pastors of our text, the Corinthian epistle adds a list of various gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, healings, helps, governments, and tongues. In neither case is given a formal and exact list of officers, nor is any such furnished in any part of the New Testament. Happily, it was no part of New Testament religion to prescribe the kind of government and the names of functionaries that *must* be found in all Christian churches, if they are to deserve the name of Church. That return to Judaism was reserved for later and less truly Christian generations. And for us in this matter of the Church, the New Testament is our guide and authority. Not the Fathers, however early; not the Mediæval Church, however "catholic" or dogmatic; nor the revived mediævalism of our own times, imposing a yoke which our fathers were not able to bear, and which we are determined neither to carry ourselves nor to impose on others.

1. But the principle of a ministry appointed by Christ in His Church is here obviously laid down; also, as it seems to me, the principles of (1) Order, (2) Variety. Let me speak first of Order.

The placing of apostles first in the list is easily

intelligible. Christ had chosen twelve apostles, and the fact that on the death of Judas the number was maintained by the election of Matthias is significant. But whilst there is a meaning in the number twelve, there is no slavish adhesion to it. Paul breaks gloriously in on what might have settled down to be a blind trust in a magic number. Barnabas receives the name apostle; even Andronicus and Junias, whom Paul describes in his courteous way as "of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." But whether in the narrower or wider sense, the apostles were unique, they left no successors. They had their own work to do and their own testimony to give, such as could not be repeated; and the only true successors of the apostles to-day are men who work in apostolic spirit, after apostolic fashion, for apostolic ends. If only we might be among these, and have a measure of apostolic success!

But on this question of church order, the silence of the New Testament is to be observed, as well as its speech. There are no prescribed "orders of ministry" in this list, such as the bishops, presbyters, deacons, of whom in the next generation we hear so much. Not that these officers are unimportant in their place, but theirs is not the first place, nor are these, *as officers*, among the essential gifts of Christ to the Church. They belong to the department of human arrangements, and change with changing human conditions. No diocesan bishop is to be found in the New Testament, nor was such an office generally established till towards the close of the second century. The only "overseer" of the New Testament is an elder, and the elder is an overseer. What the ecclesiastical institutions of this kind were in New Testament times is an interesting

and important question ; but the one thing certain is, that the New Testament gives no exact and specific directions concerning church officers for the regulation of the Church in all ages. The circumstances of the New Testament Church can never be repeated, and the gospel does not lay upon Christian believers of successive generations and various countries the "dead hand" of the Koran. Nothing could be more alien to its spirit than the teaching that Christendom is tied down to certain forms and offices, without which there can be no Church and no salvation. Episcopacy as a form of government is excellent for many purposes ; it may claim the sanction of early and widespread usage, and there have been periods when it has rendered valuable service in unifying and consolidating a growing Church. Presbyterianism is excellent in its way ; it may quote New Testament precedents, and it avoids the undeniable evils of prelacy. Congregationalism has its excellences, and some of the New Testament churches were probably Congregationalist in government, though it may well be questioned whether the loose ecclesiastical order of Congregationalism could long suffice for the purposes of a growing Church, and this the representatives of that system in our own day are beginning to realise. But there is no Leviticus in the New Testament. As there is no priesthood in the Christian Church corresponding to the Jewish sacerdotal caste, so there is no genealogical descent of a priesthood, with a pedigree reckoned by the imposition of the hands, not necessarily of holy men, perhaps even of impious men, but of men themselves ordained by functionaries of a particular name, and claiming themselves a particular ecclesiastical descent. Such narrow ecclesiasticism, disclaimed by the noblest and best Anglican teachers,

is one of the heresies of our time, a fruitful parent of schism, which you will do well to resist and expose whenever our people are assailed by it.

2. These things being so, you need never hesitate about the validity of your orders. You belong to a Church, if the definition of the Anglican article is to hold, "The Church is a congregation of faithful men, in which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments duly administered"; or the definition of the Anglican Prayer-Book, "the mystical body of Thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." You belong to one of the most highly organised churches in Christendom; one in which the selection of ministers is most carefully made, and a godly jealousy continually exercised concerning ministerial character and doctrine and discipline; a Church framed after the New Testament model, though with no slavish copying of New Testament nomenclature; a Church raised up in this country by the immediate operation of the Spirit of God at a time when religion was at its lowest ebb; a Church directed from step to step of its constitution, not by human plans and foresight, but by the guidance of Providence, to meet successive needs and exigencies; a Church so blessed by God that it has spread into all parts of the world, divided into several sections—more in number than could be desired, but in their very multiplicity rendering more varied service—and it is now perhaps the largest Protestant community in the world. It need no more disturb you that the hand of an Anglican bishop has not been placed on your head than it disturbs the Anglican that the sanction of the Pope has not been given to his bishops. What God has stamped for one hundred and fifty years with His own seal requires no countersigning on the

part of a human ecclesiastical functionary ; the Divine mark remains indelible, unless erased by the Church's own unfaithfulness. The candlestick stands in its place until He remove it ; and it is for all of us, ministers especially, to see that the lamp He has kindled burns with clear and pure and world-illuminating flame.

3. You need not be disturbed concerning your orders ; but order we believe there is in the Christian ministry, and that it was intended from the very first. A Methodist superintendent is as near an approach to an early Christian bishop as can easily be found ; but now, as in primitive times, amongst ministers who all belong to one order and stand on one level, distinctions of office are recognised and specialisation becomes necessary for the various purposes of a widely ramifying community. For example, as need directs, it may become advisable to set apart "Connexional Evangelists," or to use the term "Mission" instead of "Circuit" to describe new work carried on under new and special conditions. All this lies in the province of a self-governing Church. Our own possesses complete freedom, unfettered by State control, but that freedom is exercised in harmony with an order which is determined by a very significant history and a tradition from which we are rightly very slow to depart.

It will be your duty, brethren, to work in harmony with that order and discipline, as you have promised to do ; it will be your wisdom to understand it, loyally to observe it, perhaps by and by to try to improve its working, as time makes changes necessary ; though for the most part and for most people the time-honoured maxim of Wesley holds good—"not to mend our rules, but to keep them for conscience' sake." The man

whose spirit frets against order, whose idiosyncrasies are too pronounced to endure discipline, who cannot work in harness and in harmony with others, had better not think of becoming a Wesleyan Methodist minister!

4. But what variety there is in the order! I will not go beyond the four words mentioned in the text, though the New Testament contains many other names describing functions which find their counterpart amongst us to-day.

Prophets—are they obsolete, extinct? Did they indeed disappear with the second or third generation of believers? Are we to think of them as men whose special function was to predict, or rather, as 1 Corinthians xiv. 24 shows, men of exceptional spiritual insight and power of utterance, able to sound the unbelieving heart, so that one who enters the Christian assembly and hears them speak will “fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.” Shall prophets be lacking to-day in Christ’s Church? Is not this one of Christ’s most direct and necessary gifts, that of men with power to discern spirits, to read the signs of the times, to turn the search-light of Divine truth into the crannies of the human heart and on all the devious paths of human life; men with power to bring directly home to the human spirit, as if God Himself were speaking, the weight and mystery of eternal things? The prophet is needed amongst us to-day. Brethren, covet earnestly the best gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. And remember, that in order to rise to this highest function, you must sink yourself to the very lowest. The man who “speaks from his own heart” sees nothing. The true seer is he before whose eyes no scales of earth and self and sin

are set to prevent the clear vision of God; one who is quick to catch the accents of the Divine voice, his ear awakened morning by morning to listen, and his tongue taught day by day, as the tongue of the learned, how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

Evangelist was in the early days the name of an itinerant missionary of the gospel, and the word has kept much of its old connotation. But in these later times, woe to that Church in which Evangelism becomes the monopoly of the few, or the badge of a mere section of ministers. Every minister is to have the heart of an evangelist, and every Methodist preacher is, or ought to be, a home missionary. For consider. An evangelist is a man who is prompt to carry the glad tidings of the gospel to those who need it, and in what part of what country are none such to be found? Many of these are living close by our side, moving unsuspected at our very doors. Those who need the gospel do not all dwell in slums or wear rags. Never yield to the wretched delusion that your ministry has "got beyond" this elementary but all-pervading function. You can never get beyond it. In your sermons, your Sunday-school addresses, your private conversation, as well as in your open-air services, make the glad tidings of salvation known! Do not assume that men know all about the gospel, or do not need its message. In season and out of season, with no mere professional demeanour or cant phrases, but in a bright, cheerful, helpful spirit, be an evangelist! Carry the message of God's love in Christ to sinful men as one which is continually passing afresh through the mint of your own experience and prove it to be current gold. Evangelise! First, last, middle, without end! It is work that never tires him who

speaks or him who listens, if it be rightly done. In 2 Timothy iv. 5, "Do the work of an evangelist," is synonymous with "fulfil thy ministry," and the word is applied in the New Testament to all classes of Christian workers except the apostles, and they were evangelists above everything.

Pastors and teachers are generally understood to be two names referring to one class. The two kinds of work indicated go together; they supplement each other, sometimes overlap each other. "Pastor" takes us back to Christ's words to Peter in John xxi., "Feed My lambs, tend My sheep, feed My sheep," and it includes all kinds of attendance to all parts of the flock. You are bidden, in the words of the Ordinal, "to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are scattered abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

Distinguish between a shepherd and—ugly word and awful thing—a hireling! A minister who professes to fulfil his duty by merely preaching sermons at times appointed, without looking after his people, is a hireling, not a shepherd. It is not a question of paying so many visits a week—though a definite record of the number of visits actually paid is useful, and often admonitory—it is the *caring* for the people, as an Eastern shepherd cares for his sheep, as Christ has cared for us. You may visit without caring; you cannot care without visiting. All is wrapped up in the having a shepherd's heart—the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Teachers—but can we teach? Have we something to teach beside hearsays—something besides the gospel

alphabet, besides the "fourth standard," that almost every child in the Christian school has reached? How far are we beyond our highest pupils? Have many of them out-distanced us long ago? Brethren, you are to be teachers. Do you know the Bible? In the original tongues, well; but in the English tongue, do you *know* this Book of books? Do you know its less trodden ways? Can you repeat from it at large and accurately? Can you give references freely, the substance of chapters and books readily? Histories, prophets, Psalms, Gospels, Epistles? Tell me that you have travelled over a continent, and I will believe you, though it takes some journeying to do that even in these days; but you must be a traveller indeed if you know all the cities and villages in all the countries of this continent. Make it your aim to know the Bible through and through; wherever you are weak, be mighty in the Scriptures, and as a Christian minister you will never lack the power to teach.

You must learn to know men also; but on this I will not enlarge. Two books are ours—the Bible and human nature—and alas for us, we know neither as they ought to be known! Lord, teach us to know Thee and to know ourselves; to know Thy Book and to know Thy children inside and outside Thy Church—and then we shall be teachers indeed.

The spirit of a prophet, the heart of an evangelist, the soul of a pastor, the mind of a teacher—these are the high qualifications which ought to characterise the Christian minister of to-day. Who is sufficient for these things? Thanks be to God who makes us sufficient, as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter which killeth, but of the spirit which giveth life.

III. FOR THE LOFTIEST CONCEIVABLE END.

This end is nothing less than the Christianising of mankind. At first sight the Church only seems to be mentioned—"the perfecting of the saints, the building up of the body of Christ." But the world is not forgotten. The Church is to be the means of regenerating the world. The single word "evangelist" shows us this. St. Paul's vision is not bounded by any circumscribed ecclesiastical horizon, and in the third chapter he dwells at length on the privilege of preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. This antithesis between Church and world is foreign to his thought. It is sometimes said, let ministers seek out sinners, and the saints will take care of themselves. Again it has been said, let the ministers build up the saints, and they will look after the sinners. The fact, of course, being that neither aim is to be pursued to the neglect of the other, and that the distinction between "saints" and "sinners," as judged by men, is largely factitious. To the minister is given the glorious calling of helping to turn sinners (himself included) into saints, and of helping to make saints, so-called (himself included), into saints indeed. And this work embraces in its scope not some confined enclosure styled the Church, but the whole ransomed world. See how this is brought out by the phraseology of our three clauses.

a. The perfecting of the saints.—This name for believers indicates status rather than character, an ideal rather than a realisation, a calling of which Christians as yet are only partially worthy. And ministers are described as those whose business it is *καταρτίζειν*, to fit them in their place and for their

place, fully to equip them for their designed purpose, adequately to qualify them to be saints indeed.

b. The work of ministering.—Some interpreters join this clause closely with the former, and this would give to the saints a share in the work of ministering, which is unquestionably theirs. But A.V. and R.V. concur in giving to this clause a separate position and emphasis; indicating, what is undoubtedly true, that while all Christians should join in spiritual ministering, those whom Paul describes have in a special sense the privilege of being the servants of all.

c. Building up the body of Christ.—Here is a blending of metaphors, but no confusion. Think, if you will, of a vast building, in which is heard “neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron,” rising in majestic silence upon one sure and immovable foundation, one all-uniting and all-consummating Corner-stone, which needs wise master-builders and many apt and diligent workmen. Think, if you will, of a highly organised, delicately articulated, and harmoniously compacted body, of many members, each having its own office, each needing to be cared for and nourished, that it may grow to perfection, all under one Head, through whom are all things, and they through Him; and view, as the apostle does, all gathered into one under this one Head, even Christ; the whole constituting, as no individual can by himself, a full-grown man, “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” What a consummation! Dante imagined in heaven a mystical White Rose of Paradise, in which all the saints of all the generations of the age of the ages do but help to form the ever-circling and perpetually infolded and unfolding petals—a celestial flower deriving the lustre of its transcendent bloom from the

great central Light, towards which the great multitude of that glorified host ever gaze adoring. But the conception of St. Paul is still more glorious, as he contemplates a consummation in which all have attained unto "the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God," and whole worlds of Christlike followers are blended into one vast, living organism—every perfected individual and the magnificent completed whole stamped with the indelible impress of Him who is at the same time the living Head of that living body and the perfect pattern of each several member—Christ all and in all!

To this sublime end all Christians are to contribute. There should be no invidious distinction of clergy and laity here. But Paul is speaking of the special duty of ministers in bringing about this end; and these have their own solemn—I had almost said awful—responsibility in this matter. No others are set apart to this work in the sense that they are released from the toil and care of worldly callings, that they may devote themselves to it alone. No others profess to be called of God to do this only while life shall last, as men whose duty it is to "apply themselves wholly to this one thing and draw all their cares and studies this way." The text says in plainest fashion, "Christ gave some to be pastors and teachers for the edifying of the body of Christ," and the responsibility for the attainment of the end rests mainly upon the ministers of the Church. From this unquestionable statement spring two or three practical corollaries of the utmost importance to you who are just ordained and to all Christian ministers; and with these I will close.

1. *Keep the end in view.*—One main cause of the corruptions of the Church, especially in her ministry,

has been that means have been allowed to take the place of ends, and to obscure, if not to exclude, them. The whole history of ecclesiasticism illustrates this. Sacerdotalism and Sacramentalism are but the exaggeration of the privileges of an order and the significance of a sacred institution, both of which exist for an end—the Christianisation of mankind. Not to form a complete ecclesiastical system of which it should be said, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*—outside the Church no salvation—did Christ choose apostles and institute a ministry; not for the development of an elaborate system of doctrine, of which it should be said, “This is the Catholic faith, which before all things it is necessary a man should hold, and which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” Not to draw up a code of ethics, which the clergy, as skilled casuists, should administer, deciding all cases of conscience and claiming to be well-nigh infallible guides of men. Church government is important, church doctrine is more important, church practice is most important of all; and in relation to all these ministers are charged with sacred duties which I am not disposed for a moment to underestimate.

But I beseech you, keep the end in view. It contemplates *men*, not systems, not creeds, not the details of conduct. These are means; the end is the kingdom of God in Christ, which consists of men—sinners, forgiven, cleansed, renewed, made Christlike in personal character, and built up into a vast organism, inconceivably larger than any actual and humanly constituted community, which shall be a mystical body of Christ indeed. Keep in view the men and women and children for whom Christ died. Nothing is important

in this world but persons; nothing is important in persons but character. The only power in this world which can set the character of persons wholly right, individually and collectively, is the gospel of Christ; and ministers are men set apart to bring this incomparable power to bear for this great end—the Christianising of mankind. And when I say Christianising, I mean making like Christ by means of the gospel of Christ. Ministers must suffer nothing even temporarily to hide from them that it is their business to be as full of the spirit of the gospel as possible, and as like Christ as possible, that they may shape the Church, and through it the world, into this glorious likeness—that they may build up out of the old order of things, in its confusion and misery and despair, a new body in its splendour and symmetry and strength, till *all* come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and earth be heaven indeed.

2. *Give yourselves wholly to it.*—What else in life is worth doing in comparison? I undervalue none of the delights of this beautiful world, nor the objects of study that it provides, nor the lesser ends that are to be considered in their place. But let the great and ultimate end determine the significance and proportions of every means and part. In your studies be no bookworms, do not value scholarship for its own sake, do not allow yourselves to be beguiled into a literary dilettanteism; bring your learning, if you have it—your exact scholarship, your literary and æsthetic taste, your vigorous commonsense, if you possess these gifts—to bear upon the great end—how to shape your own and others' character after this perfect type. In your preaching remember Colossians i. 28, "Whom we preach,

warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ." Does your preaching tend to this—salvation in the large sense of that too often restricted word; and do you make your exposition of Scripture, your doctrine, your illustrations, your ethics, your history, your poetry, your literary allusions, bend with the most complete submission to one all-dominating and overmastering purpose of bringing men to Christ and making men Christlike? The social means of grace, the various agencies of our endlessly ramifying organisation, the getting of money, the building of churches, the guiding of the young in their guilds and schools, the daily intercourse of life—all subordinated to the realisation of one sublime purpose! What a calling is this, to be set apart for the very purpose of enabling men to keep ever before them the great ends of life! But what if the minister himself forget the end in the means? If he should allow himself to be mainly a student, or mainly a popular orator, or mainly a lecturer, or mainly a writer of books, or mainly an ecclesiastic, or mainly an organiser of financial schemes, or mainly an agreeable personage in society, or a little of each of these, while he ceases to be mainly, manifestly, persistently, a gift of Christ to men for the renewing and Christianising of the world—what words can describe such a failure? Such a lapse is never likely to come about overtly and directly; no Christian man could ever deliberately make such a great refusal, or fall wilfully away from so high a calling. The temptations to such selling of our birthright for a mess of pottage are insidious and therefore the more dangerous. In actual life it is only too easy to lose sight of the goal whilst we think we are running towards it, and to

swerve from the mark through undue concentration upon the steps supposed to lead up to it.

I recall myself, while I am calling you, to unity of purpose in the pursuit of one splendid aim. It is no narrow or restricted aim. It is wide enough, high enough, glorious enough for all a man's energies at all times. There is no danger of your becoming cramped or dwarfed in their exercise, no danger that, in pursuing it, any of your faculties, however lofty or various, will suffer atrophy or decay. It will strain your best energies and call out a thousand capabilities of which you were not conscious, if you make it the whole object of your life to build up out of the old chaos of humanity a new cosmos—to take some small part in building up that new Order of which Christ is Lord and Ruler, Type and Pattern, Norm and End—the kingdom of which He is Mediatorial King, because He is the Mediatorial Saviour of all its subjects; the kingdom which in the end beyond the end shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, when Christ shall have abolished all rule and authority and power but His own, and God be all in all.

3. That glorious end is coming, however far off it may now seem to be. And the thought of that great consummation brings the much-needed assurance of *the help that will be given to us in promoting it*. The work is not ours, but God's. His is the conception and the execution; He knows the end to be reached and the means to be employed. We did not choose Him, He chose and appointed us that we should bear fruit, and that our fruit should remain.

Oh, the goodness of God,
Employing a clod
His tribute of glory to raise!

Who are we that we should have it as the one task of life to further that great end for which the Lord of Glory lived and died? What are we that He should grant to us to lay one stone in that building, to reap one sheaf of corn in that harvest, to contribute one mite to the treasure-house in that city of God? When we hear Him ask, Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? we answer in shame and despair, "Lord, of ourselves, we could not even watch one hour with Thee whilst Thou art drinking of that cup of agony and glory." But as the confession of the prodigal son was cut short by the father's kiss, so our Master graciously closes our lips at that phrase, "we cannot of ourselves," by passing round us in our weakness His arm, as strong as it is tender, and whispering in our ears, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing—in Me ye can do all things—My grace is sufficient for thee."

These promises are for you, dear younger brethren, in the solemn and joyful hour of your ordination to this holy ministry. They are for all ministers present here to-day in their renewed consecration to the loftiest work in which any man can engage himself. They are for all the ministers of our Church and of that vastly larger Church of Christ outside our borders, as they help forward the kingdom of God on earth and hasten the advent of the kingdom of God in heaven. They are for all Christ's people, as in their place and measure they share in a work which belongs to all true Christians, according to their gifts and opportunities. And we need not fear that He who is ordering this great progress of the ages, and bringing about His own vast and benign purposes for humanity, will forget us whom in His incredible mercy He has

appointed to help him. The history of mankind is complex and difficult to interpret, but there is one goal towards which humanity is being, often unconsciously, guided. Listen to the rhythm of the music which sways that great procession of the generations—unto the dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up under Christ as Head all things in heaven and upon earth. “Feel the earth move sunward and join the great march onward.” Keep time and tune with that great triumphal march of the ages, keep rank and step yourselves in that great array, aid as best you can the stragglers, recall the wanderers, help to bring home the deserters. Think and pray and toil and strive, all in one direction: spend and be spent, all for one end, the perfecting of the saints, the work of ministering, the building up of the body of Christ.

So when He comes to try every man's work of what sort it is, your structure shall be of gold and silver and precious stones, not of wood, hay, or stubble; you shall by His grace be enabled to lift up your face without shame or fear, and it shall be given you to stand, not solitary, bereft and sad, but as faithful under-shepherds to come bringing your sheep in your hand; as faithful workers in the broad harvest field, bringing your sheaves with you. And to Him, that great Shepherd of the sheep, to Him, the supreme Lord of the harvest field, be the sole and the eternal praise!

IV

How lovely are the Messengers! ¹

How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?—ROM. x. 14, 15.

ST. PAUL is often praised for his cogent logic. Men point to the powerful reasoning of this epistle, the keen dialectic of "Galatians," the arguments underlying the sermons to the Jews at Antioch and to the Greeks at Athens—and they are right. But there is a logic which does everything but convince. The mere reasoner, who knows how to frame his syllogisms and silence an opponent, often leaves him unmoved, unchanged. And St. Paul's style is at least as remarkable for its fervour and vehemence of emotion as for its skilfully constructed reasoning. As matter of fact, that which persuades men and carries them away is logic on fire with feeling; feeling strong enough to reach the depths of the heart, but so restrained within the bounds of reason and sobriety that it becomes ten times more effective as it pours down in a clearly defined channel, than if allowed loosely to indulge itself and carelessly to spread over fields far off and near.

That is exactly what Paul gives us, as this epistle

¹ Sermon preached in connection with the eighty-eighth Anniversary of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society in Wesley's Chapel, 30th April 1902.

abundantly proves. The doctrinal portion of it is full of careful reasoning, as the writer concludes all mankind under sin, and shows the grounds of righteousness by faith. But it never becomes dry and abstract; you can always feel the pulse of the warm-hearted apostle beating underneath. Think of these three chapters only—the ninth, tenth, and eleventh; the condensed philosophy of history they contain, exhibiting the great thinker. But they begin with an outburst so impassioned as almost to shock cold-blooded readers, who have neither sympathy nor understanding: “I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake!” The eager expression of his “heart’s desire and prayer” for these brethren shows where the warm soul of the man is throughout all his reasoning concerning the sovereignty of God and His eternal decrees. The vehemence of spirit is there, but Paul is not carried away by it. He knows just where he stands, and where the Jews, his kinsmen according to the flesh, stand. He leaves no loophole of escape for those who follow his argument, and in the passage from which the text is taken reasons out his conclusions concerning the gospel to the Gentiles, leaving no inch of standing-ground for the objector.

In particular, we find a series of rhetorical questions pressed home, which rise like the series in chapter viii. to a triumphant climax. The drift of the argument is as follows. The Jews had not understood the real nature of God’s righteousness, but would go about to establish their own. Righteousness by faith is defined in verses 8 and 9: not he who does certain works is righteous, but he who believes on Christ in his heart, and confesses Him with his mouth. The way of salvation through Christ is open for all (vers. 11, 12)

—no distinction is made between Jew and Greek, it is “whosoever believeth” that is saved. But to be saved, they must call; and to call, they must believe; and to believe, they must hear. And, says our text, in order to hearing, there must be preaching on the part of man and sending on the part of God, as Isaiah lii. proves—fair indeed on the mountain side are the swift and gracious feet of the heralds whom God sends to proclaim the message of peace.

The bearing of these truths on the main argument is not perfectly clear. On this point interpreters differ. Probably those are right who say that St. Paul’s main object was to fix responsibility upon the Jews, to whom the gospel message had been given, so many of whom refused to obey, though they did hear (ver. 19), whilst the Gentiles were much more obedient (vers. 20, 21). But in the course of his argument St. Paul is led to lay down principles which apply to the gospel in all ages, and which it is appropriate for us to work out in relation to what are called Foreign Missions.

The argument begins at the widest—the Lord, *i.e.* Christ, is rich unto all that call upon Him. But for the enjoyment of the riches, there must be calling; and for the calling, there must be believing; and for believing, hearing; and for hearing, preaching; and for preaching there must be sending—all links in a golden chain, the staple of which is fixed in the throne of God’s everlasting love and eternal purpose. All these are steps in a ladder, the foot of which stands amidst the welter of man’s sin and ruin, its top lost in the glories of the Eternal City. There are many ways of accounting for man’s condition, and helping him out of it: this is the way of the Bible, the way of God in Christ. At this end of the chain or the ladder, wealth,

unsearchable riches; at that end, emptiness, poverty, destitution, ruin; and between these two ends the interlocking arms and hands of spiritual supply. The rich Lord sends, men preach; the poor and needy hear, believe, and call; and then more than all the wealth of all the Indies is theirs in the righteousness which comes by faith, and the full salvation given by Jesus Christ the Lord.

If anything be wrong with a piece of complicated machinery, if the raw material which is properly supplied at one end does not come out in its finished state at the other, you examine at once to see what wheels are clogged, what bolts are loose, what bands are broken. The work of evangelism is going on in the Church of Christ at home and abroad with some success, but not so well or so rapidly that inquiry is out of place. Take only two links in the chain to-day—the nations cannot hear without a preacher, and men cannot preach unless they are sent. What has the Church to say as to the fulfilment of her duty in these two elements which go to constitute the success of Foreign Missions?

I. WAITING EARS.

1. How can they hear without a preacher? But it may be said, Why should men wait for a message in regard to fundamental questions affecting their own lives? Each soul is born afresh into this wonderful world; it is not without its own thoughts of God, and truth, and duty; it is an heir also of long and sacred traditions, and in the matter of what is called salvation, it need not wait for any "preacher" to come from no one knows where with an outside proclamation.

True, there is such a thing as "natural theology," perhaps a "natural religion." Paul has spoken of it in Acts xvii. and Romans i. and ii. more wisely than most philosophers. He tells us that the invisible is made known through the visible, even God's everlasting power and divinity; that, apart from the law, nations may be found doing the things of the law, and be a law unto themselves; and that God made of one all nations, to feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. Christianity at least has nothing to say against such "natural religion" as this. Christ points in the Sermon on the Mount to the lessons of nature and of conscience. John identifies the Word made flesh with the Light that lighteth every man coming into the world. All careful students of religion find tokens of its universality; and all the wisest find a measure of truth in ethnic religions. No Christian, St. Paul least of all, is disposed to slight the evidences of God's presence in the hearts of all mankind, or to disparage reverent feeling and upright life wherever found.

2. But the wisest men, having said so much, are obliged to say more. The light shines, but in the midst of darkness; it shines all too feebly and fitfully, and the darkness comprehends it not, and for the most part is in danger of quenching, and overcoming it. Mark the complexity of the problems of human life that call for solution, and the tangle in which they are left, if only the light of nature and of conscience and of history be found to shine upon them. A voice? There are a thousand voices, many of them seemingly inconsistent—which of them all is to be believed? Mark the uncertainty of men left to grope their own way to the light; is there none to speak with heavenly

authority and guide them in the right way? Mark also the serious deficiency in the best knowledge thus unattainable. It goes so far, no farther. Nature and conscience do, indeed, point out many things which men should not do, and punish them if they disobey these laws. But if men go wrong, how are they to get right? Nature says, It is not in me, whose order is stern, rigid, inexorable. Conscience says, It is not in me; I told you plainly the path of duty; now that you have deserted it, take the inevitable consequences.

3. One might easily illustrate this from the history of the nations, though it would take too long to do so adequately. It requires comparatively little knowledge of history to prove the need of a Divine revelation, if the problems of humanity are to be solved, or to prove the need of a preacher who may bring from God Himself a message of illumination and help. Students of the history of Greece and Rome may tell what help was to be gained from Platonic or Stoic philosophy, even if the multitude had had ability to learn its lessons. If we turn to India and China, neither the speculations of the Brahmin, nor the asceticism of Fakirs, nor the "way of deliverance" of the Buddhist, nor the maxims of Confucius, meet the needs of the soul seeking for salvation from the guilt and power of sin. If we turn to Africa and the South Seas, as representing another type of human nature, simpler, lower, more ignorant, the needs are as great and the helplessness of man left to himself even more apparent. Think of fetishism; the superstition which makes life one long fear, dark shadows on every path, mortals cowering like poor hunted creatures in dread of malignant spirits at every step, and no God over all, or One that knows or cares not. How shall people

such as these hear the news they long for, without a preacher?

But there is no need to argue these points, for the highest religion of all was that of the Jew. Here we find a Divine revelation, though one imperfect and partial. And if we begin by pointing out the immense superiority of the Jew, to whom were committed the oracles of God, we must go on to point out the inability of the law to save, the insufficiency of the sacrifices to make the offerer perfect as pertaining to the conscience, the deep moral and spiritual deficiency which led to Pharisaism and Rabbinism. Surely the Jew of our Lord's day, of Paul's day, sorely needed to hear more than his justly prized law could teach him of the way of salvation; yet how could he hear without a preacher?

4. Look out, then, upon the nations. See them all with waiting ears, listening eagerly, but as yet is no sound which can lead sinners in the direction of a free and full salvation, a righteousness which is by faith. They may not have known, in the vast majority of cases have not known, what they were waiting for. Here lies the pathos of the position. Jew and Gentile, ancient Greek and modern Englishman, Hindu sage and South Sea savage, alike need a kind of help which can only come by direct proclamation, a message from the God whom the groping nations are feeling after but cannot find, not a result of reasoning, not an elaborated system, not a philosophy of life, not a code of ethics or a volume of sage maxims, but an authoritative announcement of the mind and will of God, and a way marked out in which the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err; they wait and long to hear, but how can they hear without a preacher?

The substance of the kind of message needed is given in verses 12 and 13—faith in a Lord of all, who is rich unto all that call upon Him, and able to bestow in abundance the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of nature, the deliverance from evil, the ultimate triumph over death and the powers of darkness, without which the soul of man cannot be satisfied. A life of faith; not a reasoning up to the Great First Cause, nor an observation of the laws of human existence. A life of trust in a living Lord of perfect wisdom, power, righteousness, and love, who holds all in the hollow of His hand, whose own holiness is absolutely unsullied, yet who can prove Himself the righteous justifier of him who believeth in a Saviour able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. One who is rich to those who can do nothing but call; who is rich to all who call; whose word “whosoever” is unlimited, making no distinction between Jew and Greek, English and Fijian, educated and ignorant, high caste and pariah; whose free gift of righteousness, such as no Jewish law or Confucian code ever dreamed of or hinted at, is not for one race, or tribe, or type, or generation; He is a living Lord, who satisfies human needs with one universal, perpetual, absolute religion. If men could but hear of such? But how can they hear without a preacher?

5. So they wait. They watch, and listen, and ask, sometimes in hope, oftener in despair, Who will show us any good such as this?

Saviour, lo! the isles are waiting,
Stretched the hand and strained the sight.

These words are not literally true, if the phraseology

be pressed. They are to be interpreted in the light of other lines—

Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for Thee each mortal breast.

Many are literally, consciously, earnestly seeking, as the history of missions in all ages has shown. Reading, thinking, asking, praying, but obtaining no answer that satisfies or saves. The great multitude, however, are not so waiting. They are sunk in an ignorance which allows of no inquiry; stained with sins and in bondage to evil passions, which permit no desire for deliverance; occupied by ten thousand interests which fill all the room in the heart and crowd out all higher hopes and longings; some eager only for the devices and desires of their own hearts, others possessed as by a legion of devils, or by an evil spirit who knows how to gather round him seven spirits worse than himself. In all kinds of states, and conditions, and attitudes, see mankind waiting. The Lord rich over all to them that call upon Him is waiting also; but He cannot help them, because they do not call, and these men cannot call on One in whom they have not believed, and they cannot believe in One of whom they never heard—and how can they hear without a preacher?

“No man can fully lift himself up,” says Seneca in despair—“if someone would but stretch out a hand!” So cries the heathen philosopher, as one who thought it absurd that out of the blue a mighty Arm should be held out, to lift the fallen and raise the helpless; but without man’s scheming or intervention, all of God’s free grace—lo, it comes!

II. WELCOME MESSENGERS.

Beautiful upon the mountains—in all ages and under all conditions—are the feet of him who bringeth glad tidings. Pheidippides, the swift courier, brought to Athens the joyful tidings of the victory of Marathon, and died with the single word of triumph upon his lips. In the depths of despair at the siege of Lucknow was heard the music, “The Campbells are coming!” He was a hero indeed who, at the risk of his life, took the message to the imprisoned miners, knocking on the walls of their living tomb to say, Be of good cheer, help is at hand! So with more sacred messages. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountains; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength! Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! But a man who brings such a message must be sure that it is true. He must be instructed, warranted, authorised, despatched—how shall they preach, except they be sent?

In this case—

1. God must send. He only has the authority, the power. He alone can make the proclamation necessary for the forgiveness of the sins of a single offender, He alone for a world. He alone can commission, teach, prompt, guide, equip messengers who are to carry such tidings as these.

Hence, when Jesus says, in Matthew x. 38, “The harvest is plenteous, the labourers are few,” He does not bid men go, nor does He bid them call others; but bids them pray the Lord to send labourers into the harvest. Hence, when Paul describes, in 2 Corinthians v. 19, the ministry of reconciliation, he says, God has

committed it to us ; we are ambassadors for Him ; we beseech you in Christ's stead to be reconciled, and to accept the gracious proclamation which offers you the righteousness which is by faith.

Men cannot preach unless they are sent. They may argue, harangue, exhort, declaim ; but the preacher is a herald, a man with a message. And in this matter it means a message from God to man, which he is empowered to deliver. Christ is Himself the first great Christian preacher, proving Himself to have indeed come from God ; but He is much more than this : He came that His followers might have a gospel to preach, one that they are sure of and which they can make others also to be sure of, that it is a message from God indeed. And only as a man is taught by the Spirit of God and of Christ can he receive, or understand, or deliver this message which the world is waiting to hear.

2. It was so at the beginning. Christ chose twelve men. Not wrote a treatise, nor laid down the lines of elaborate organisation, nor drew up a code of laws or principles, but Himself lived, and taught, and worked, and—prepared men and sent them out. Partly in our Lord's lifetime, but much more after His death, apostleship was vital to the whole movement—Ye have not chosen Me, I have chosen you and sent you. Go forth and be My witnesses even to the ends of the earth. The charter of missions begins with the words, Go ye, for I send you.

So with Paul, who was a "vessel of election" for a definite purpose, which he carried out with characteristic earnestness, fidelity, and success. His question, What wilt Thou have me to do ? was answered by the one word, Go to the Gentiles, to whom now I send

thee. And his credentials at the beginning of every letter are, Paul, a bond-slave and messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ, an apostle, not of man, nor through man, but of Him who revealed His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.

None the less in humbler cases and in later generations. Not all Christ's messengers have had Paul's work to do, or his equipment for work. Did Thomas go to India, Matthew to Parthia? We do not know, and it does not matter. Those men and churches have been most fully in the apostolic succession who have most fully caught the apostolic spirit and most faithfully followed in the apostles' steps. Ulfilas among the Goths, Augustine in Britain, Cyril and Methodius among the Bulgars, Boniface in Germany, Columba among the Picts, Xavier in the East, Carey and Martyn in India, Patteson and Hunt in the South Seas, Gilmour in Mongolia, Hannington in Uganda; so also Whitefield and Wesley in the eighteenth century, Spurgeon and Moody in the nineteenth—men whose career of evangelisation has proved that the real power which moves men is not that of eloquence or argument, but the power of a true herald of God; men who have had a message to deliver, and used all their powers, whatever they may have been, in bringing it home to the consciences and hearts of men.

3. Why this should be the one Divine method we need not stay to argue. It is natural for men to imagine that a universal salvation should be matter of universal revelation; to wonder why Jesus should be born so late in Bethlehem, and Christianity spread so gradually, so slowly; to question why the nations should so long be left in darkness, and so many remain still without the light. It might be enough to fall

back upon the Divine will, that thus it should be. Or it were not hard to find many reasons for this procedure.

Enough for the moment that the Divine method of saving the world is by an appeal on the part of men to their fellows, themselves intelligently receiving, assimilating, and passing on to others the message of Divine grace. It is in accordance with God's methods of working generally, and suits the religion of the Incarnation. Not by a sign from heaven, but by dwelling among men, and teaching and drawing them to Himself, did the Son of God do His work in the world. His followers must be like Him; as the Father hath sent Me, so send I you.

Great truths must be passed through great experiences, if they are greatly to move men. It is not truth in the abstract that saves, but truth as assimilated and reproduced in mind and heart, in experience and life. Nutriment for living creatures must be prepared; it cannot be taken direct from the elements, but must be fitted for appropriation. So plants take carbon from the air, some animals feed on vegetation only, and others upon the flesh of other animals. Man's mind is made for truth, but truth must be presented in a prepared state. It may be obtained through books, but the normal method is through "preaching," by which I need not say is not meant mere pulpit deliverances. Books are fossilised human thoughts, and impart truth, as the rays of the sun embodied in the coal measures furnish artificial light. But the match is needed to set the coal ablaze, and the experience, the sympathy, the living word from the living man, are the chief powers which God the Holy Spirit uses for the work of bringing the gospel home to the

hearts of men. As God's authority is needed to equip a messenger, so human instrumentality is needed to carry the message. How shall they preach except they be sent?

4. But there is another side to this. The co-operation of the Church is necessary. God sends, the man is sent—what more is to be said? Much more, because no man is alone, and this work cannot be carried out by a number of incoherent atoms. Each receives truth more or less in connection with the many-branched society called the Church, and it is the business of this community to see that the work of sending is properly carried on. How shall they preach except they be sent? is a question which has a human as well as a Divine side, and it is a question which, for many reasons, I am anxious to press on this congregation to-day.

How has this work of the Church been done, and how is it being done in our time? Taken as a whole, we are compelled to say, Always very imperfectly, sometimes very badly, sometimes not at all. The history of Foreign Missions is in many ways discouraging. In the modern Church it was begun late, maintained for long in a half-hearted fashion, and it is hardly being carried on now as if she fully understood her commission, her duty, and her responsibility.

A while ago we prayed that openings might be found in countries closed against missionaries—God opened doors on every hand. Later we prayed for men willing and fitted to go, and God sent them in numbers. But with all these open doors, and all these men ready to enter them, the work cannot be done unless the Church is prepared to do its duty in the matter of "sending."

It is at this point that the pause occurs at this moment. The question that of all others causes anxiety in the hearts of the friends of missions is—will the churches at home rise to their great opportunity? They have given to the cause of Foreign Missions, and are giving, some with great generosity; but giving on a distinctly higher scale and in greatly increased proportion is necessary, if—I do not say all the multiplying opportunities of the hour are to be met, but if the most urgent and reasonable claims of our actual work are not to be repudiated. How long it would take to evangelise the world, in the sense that no considerable portion of its population should be left without the opportunity of hearing the “joyful sound” of the gospel, I will not inquire. Calculations have been made which show that such an enterprise is not so far beyond the reach of the churches as might be imagined. I confine myself to the needs—the crying, imperative, immediate needs—of our own work, and I would that I could put them before you so as to give you the picture of the waiting ears and longing hearts to which we have the opportunity of ministering, and press home the unanswerable questions, “How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?”

Then send. Send freely. Send at once. Send to the utmost of your power. No more than this is asked; but if the whole Church were to respond to this reasonable plea, how great would be the company of preachers, how many, and how glad, the companies of hearers! Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the heralds

Who the gladsome tidings bring
Of the sunlight's hastening.

The nations wait. The missionaries wait. The Master waits. All are ready. Is the Church ready to be faithful to her high calling, and send in Christ's name those who are willing to go? For how can men hear without a preacher, and how can men preach except they be sent?

V

The Invincible Word¹

But the word of God is not bound,—2 TIM. ii. 9.

ST. PAUL was in chains. He was “suffering hardship unto bonds as a malefactor,” not as described in Acts xxviii. when he lived in his own hired dwelling and received all that went in unto him, but now, under the tyrant Nero, he stood in danger of his life, was shut up with criminals, and likely to perish with the worst of them. He was alone, or almost so. Titus had gone to Dalmatia, Crescens to Galatia, and Demas, “having loved this present world,” had gone to Thessalonica, perhaps to his own home, certainly to his own company. Only Luke stood by him in those solemn hours when he was “already being offered” and the time of his departure was come. Suffering, worn, helpless, and utterly friendless when called to face “the mouth of the lion” (chap. iv. 17), whose very breath was destructive and his eye-glance fatal, Paul showed once again how he could glory in tribulations, and the exultant cry escapes him that one thing there is which Roman fetters could not bind and Roman axes could not destroy. The Lord stood by me, he says, at my first defence, and strengthened me that the message

¹ Sermon preached in behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Wesley’s Chapel, City Road, 19th April 1899.

might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear—and amidst all the array of the lictors and all the paraphernalia of imprisonment, one invincible power manifested itself—"the word of God is not bound."

It will be at once understood that the phrase of the text does not refer to any book, neither the Old Testament nor any part of the New. The "word" spoken of here means the living word of the living God concerning a living Saviour, proclaimed by the lips of a living man. It is defined in Titus i. 3, "God in His own seasons manifested His word in the message where-with I was intrusted," and throughout the Bible this *living* character of the message is emphasised. "The word of God" sometimes means a special message delivered to a prophet; sometimes a more general revelation, as in the phrase from Deuteronomy viii. 4, quoted by Christ at His temptation; sometimes that special revelation which shone with unapproachable splendour in the Word Incarnate; but it does not for the most part describe a written book, still less a collection of written books. The word of God is *alive*! Its enemies may put Peter in prison, kill James with the sword, scourge Paul and Silas, and make their feet fast in the stocks. They may stone apostles as at Lystra, drive them from the city as at Thessalonica, make an uproar as of wild beasts at Ephesus, but this Divine message is beyond their rage. They cannot arrest it or check it, or even impede its progress—"so mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed." The proclamation of glad tidings concerning a crucified and risen Saviour was felt to be an evangel, and it spread with the inconceivable and unaccountable rapidity characteristic of Divine energy. It made its way

among Jews groaning under the burdens of the law, among Gentiles groping in the darkness of ignorance and crouching under the fear which superstition inflicts and thrives upon; it spread like winged seed, it flew like the swift breeze which carried the seed, it captured the hearts of men as flame in a high wind catches the pine trees of the forest. There was no power that could cabin, crib, confine its energies, and by the time that Paul wrote these words it had made its way to Rome, among the Imperial household, into the presence of the Emperor himself—illimitable, incompressible, indestructible—"the word of God is not bound!"

In this impassioned exclamation we have the record of Paul's triumphant conviction that in the gospel was a free, fetterless principle which had a marvellous force of its own, manifested in spite of the fury of oppressors, the infirmities of its advocates, and obstacles of all kinds placed in its way. It is natural—and within limits perfectly justifiable—for us to apply these words to the Bible. No longer are there amongst us apostles to whom it was given to behold with their eyes and with their hands to handle things concerning the Word of Life. For us their record is in the written, the printed book, and that has for us acquired the sacredness of the original message. Drawn up under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, the record of the Revelation comes to be identified with the revelation itself, and the book which contains the long history culminating in Christ the Word is commonly spoken of as itself the word of God. It may well be so described, if the Bible—a collection of sundry collections of literature—be not viewed merely as a book or as a conglomeration of books, but as the embodiment of a message. Regarded in this light, as the proclamation

of a message concerning a living Lord, the Bible has proved itself to be invincible indeed; a free, spiritual, fetterless energy, it has not only escaped from its worst foes, but in many instances has turned and conquered and bound them. The whole history of the Bible forms a commentary on the words of the text. And from this point of view I propose to make a fresh appeal that the Church of Christ should do its duty by the Society which devotes itself wholly to the dissemination of this Book, thus starting it afresh upon its course of conquest, helping it to do the work which it always has done through the operation of the Divine Spirit, and which it will continue to do, if the Church be faithful in the discharge of her trust in relation to it.

I. Attempts in abundance have been made to bind the word of God and hinder its work in the world. Pagan oppression took many forms, but few were more mischievous than that dead-set which was made in the time of Diocletian upon the Christian Scriptures. Time and again the edict has gone forth that all copies of the Scriptures should be confiscated or destroyed, and every effort made to induce *traditores*—betrayers of their Master in another form—to surrender the precious books. And alas! even in the Church of Christ the character of the Bible has been at some epochs so little understood that the Church itself has attempted to “bind” it. The Roman Catholic Church withholds it from the laity, priests forbid the common people to read it, and the most intelligent defend the position that the truth it contains must be doled out to the multitude, and the message move in fetters. Other ecclesiastical bodies who do not go so far as this, yet so make their vaunted “Church” the custodian and interpreter of the Bible that it is only allowed to speak

with their voice, and this, if not killing, is imprisoning the Divine word.

Those who honour the Bible most have sometimes done it serious harm. Themselves in bondage to the letter of the word, they have so identified human compositions with the very word of God as to bring discredit upon His message to the world. They have prevented the people from receiving the word in its simplicity and power because of the leading-strings in which, through laudable desire to magnify the law and make it honourable, their doctrine of Inspiration has "bound" the Bible. While Rationalists, who have come with high professions of emancipation, who claim to be "free" thinkers or nothing, have brought to the interpretation of Scripture such tacit naturalistic assumptions, that its true voice can no longer be heard. Pretending to cleanse the canvas, they have applied to it an acid which would destroy the picture, and professing to promote breadth and freedom, they have done their best to stifle the very life out of the word of the Lord.

Such attempts have been made, and I do not deny that often they seem to have been at least partially successful. Untold mischief has been done to the shrine itself by men professing to worship at the altar. There are Christian lands to-day in which it is dangerous to disseminate the Scriptures. Bible Society colporteurs in Austria tell of Bibles removed, mutilated, burnt by the priests. Where the Book is freely circulated, as in our own country, there are those who are seeking to prevent it from telling its own tale in all its simplicity and power, and it would be foolish to contend that no measure of success attends such efforts.

But speaking broadly, these efforts have failed, and will fail. The seed has such vitality that when sown in most unlikely places it produces a thirtyfold crop. Did the dragons' teeth, in the old fable, when sown produce a crop of armed men? From the places where these plain, brown volumes have been scattered, there has sprung up a living army of faithful witnesses, who in bloodless warfare have gained new victories for the fetterless Word. It would not be difficult to show in detail how the partial successes of those who have sought to bind the word have led to its ultimate emancipation and triumph.

- (1) Only partial exclusion has been possible, and the precious copies retained have been more valued and useful.
- (2) The message has often made its way more effectively because the formal proclamation of it was prevented.
- (3) The force of the current for a while held back by dam and barrier has in time swept all obstacles before it, and has even gained in force through temporary obstruction.

It has been found possible here to prevent free circulation of the Scriptures, there to disparage the New Testament in comparison with church and "Catholic" tradition, while yonder the full meaning of the Bible has been hidden or distorted by narrow or ignorant men, or it has been robbed of some of its power by reckless criticism. But none of these forces, nor all of them put together, have succeeded in capturing, imprisoning, or chaining the invincible Word.

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" We might almost venture to say, Canst

thou hold the winds in thy fists, or shut up the light in thy dark chambers, or cause the electric currents in the air to cease, or arrest the forces of gravitation? Where are the men who venture to think that in any real or lasting fashion they can put in chains the word of God which runneth very swiftly? Again, it would not be difficult, though I must not now make the attempt, to show in detail why the Divine message contained in the Bible *must* make its way in the world, spite of all obstacles.

- (1) Consider the Divine wisdom embodied in the word of Truth, which is intended for man, fitted to his needs, and commends itself to his conscience.
- (2) Consider the Divine energy in every word that is truly of God. As surely as when in creation God spake, "and it was so," He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast, so still. The same God says, "Let there be light," in creation and in redemption (2 Cor. iv. 6).
- (3) Mighty is Force, mightier is Truth, mightiest is Love. Over mountains, across seas, through bolts and bars, human love "will find out the way." But Divine Love and the message which proclaims it to perishing sinners, who will seek to bar its irresistible progress, to bind its all-conquering energy?

The inexorable certainty of natural law does but exemplify the superior energies of grace and truth. As completely as rain and snow fulfil their gracious mission from the skies and return not thither till their work is done, "so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth—it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I have sent it."

II. Look at some of the manifestations of this free and fetterless spiritual energy; some of the qualities by means of which it has achieved its conquests, and in spite of obstacles is doing its part in regenerating the world.

1. What a power it has to awaken the human conscience, how irresistibly it makes its way to the very quick of human needs, how it touches the heart with an immediate and unerring directness, spurning the bonds by which man would fetter its movements, and prevent it from probing his nature with its searching power. How it arrested Augustine, when the voice reached him, *Tolle, lege*—Take up and read! and he opened on the passage, “Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness”—ah, how the arrow flew and stuck in the very centre of that sensitive target! How many an evil-doer has that same arrow pierced and remained quivering in his conscience, despite all efforts to remove it! The power has not yet been discovered which can “bind” that word or arrest that arrow in its flight. Sometimes the word of God shatters opposition by sheer force of righteous indignation, sometimes it melts the hardest rock by the ardours of a Divine compassion. “Is not My word like a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” How this messenger disdains excuses, tears away the web of sophistries, exposes the real man to himself, till the very word is seen to be *alive*! For “the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

2. Further, what power it has to meet the cravings

of the aroused and anxious conscience. It is easy to point out evil, but terribly hard to make a straight path towards the good. The law can destroy, only the gospel can construct. The sword of the Spirit smites, but not to slay. This strange two-edged blade severs in order to unite, and deals death that it may make alive. The word which came to Luther on the steps of the *Santa Scala* at Rome was not one which further troubled his already harassed soul, but the only one that could apply balm to his spiritual wound—"The just man shall live by his faith"—and all the forces of all the churches could not "bind" that winged word.

3. Remember how it has upheld the standard of righteousness in all generations. The Bible has been and is a revelation of moral and spiritual truth to enlighten the human mind, to show the true relation of man to God, to himself, and to his fellows. But often it has stood alone as a witness to righteousness, like a trap rock in a broad alluvial plain. When the habits of life in a nation have been loose, pliant, careless, when the prophets have prophesied falsely, and priests borne rule by their means, and the people loved to have it so, the Bible has remained an incorruptible witness, that could be neither bribed nor imprisoned—"the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the furnace"—"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is Truth."

4. Bear in mind that in this word is the very life of religion in the world. "Man shall not live by bread alone," said Christ to the tempter, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man can find spiritual sustenance only when God speaks; and that is a terrible famine which is not of bread nor of

water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. There is One who satisfies abundantly this spiritual hunger; Himself the true Bread, the words that He speaks are spirit and they are life. And in vain are promulgated the edicts of emperors, in vain too are the angry anathemas of unfaithful churches. Men will not be shut out of the granaries when they are starving, and the Word of God cannot be "bound," for it is itself living, and the source of life to mankind.

5. Surely in this Word is the great testimony to the Eternal, amidst all the frailty and transiency of human life. There are some words that have a marvellous power of transporting us beyond time and space, which

Have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence,

which furnish to man a testimony that he is not of earth, nor wholly in earth, nor in any sense for earth, but that he may claim a high origin, is called with a high calling, and ought to live for high destinies. There are voices enough that cry, All flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof as the flower of grass. We need to hear the voice which adds that the word of God and he that doeth the will of God abide for ever. The word "liveth and abideth" as the generations come and go; it abides not like a majestic ruin, "a rose-red city, half as old as time," but it blooms like an amaranthine flower—heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away.

6. I might further remind you how the vitality and spiritual energy of the Word has caused it silently but potently to permeate life and literature. Several

volumes have been written on Shakspeare's use of the Bible; a new volume appeared recently with similar illustrations from John Ruskin. Professor Huxley desired that it should be read in all Board schools. Everyone knows how John Bright adorned and weighted his telling periods with words from the old Book, and perhaps none of Gladstone's perorations were finer than that in which he describes the invincible and incorruptible words of the Bible.

The word of God "bound"? You might imagine that it would be pent in by the barriers of human language. It is proverbially hard to render religious ideas into alien tongues, and the confusion of Babel has severed men in thought as well as in speech. But even so the word of God has not been hindered in its free course. The Bible Society now provides the Scriptures in three hundred and forty languages. At this moment translations or revisions are in progress in more than one hundred languages, dialects, or characters. Neither Klondyke nor the Philippines are neglected. The Bible may now be read in *all* the great known languages of mankind.

Perhaps I have needlessly laboured this argument concerning the invincible Word, and you are prepared to admit all these conclusions. If they seem commonplace, let me remind you of one or two of their legitimate corollaries.

(1) Trust to the power of the word, make it the test, the standard, the authority in all things. Trust to its power in preaching, and test the validity of the preacher's message by the measure in which he declares the whole counsel of God. Test the churches by it. In our day there is an ominous revival of ecclesiastical claims which cannot be supported by

Scripture, and if these should be allowed, they would go far to bind the word of God again in our midst.

(2) Value highly the dissemination of the Book alone. Stories have often been told of the converting power of the word, without any minister or missionary to enforce its teaching. One appears in the *Bible Society Reporter* of last month, in which a single copy of a Gospel in Tamil is described as accomplishing such work of conversion after twelve years' interval. And remember that through the colportage and other operations of this Society, carried on at home as well as abroad, more than one hundred and fifty-five million copies of the Scriptures have been distributed; more than four and a quarter millions last year, at the rate of thirteen thousand for each working day. But so much more remains to be done, especially in heathen lands, that the work done in the century now closing ought to be but the earnest of greatly multiplied efforts in the century on which we shall soon enter.

(3) But the Book alone is not intended to suffice. The Bible Society is an indispensable ally of missionary societies. There is no rivalry between those who send men and those who send books. Each needs the other. The Bible Society is ready to acknowledge its indebtedness to missionaries who aid in its work of translation and disseminate the Scriptures, and the missionary societies are ready to recognise the indispensable help of this Society. From the beginning the alliance between our own Society and it has been very close. In 1807, three years after the Bible Society was founded, a collection on its behalf was appointed by Conference in all our principal chapels. And one of our own missionary authorities has lately acknowledged the inexpressible

obligations under which our foreign missions lie to the British and Foreign Bible Society for its services in the past, adding that "there is no sign of these services being less required or less important in the future."

"Freely ye have received, freely give." The word of God which no human force can bind freed Paul from his bonds, it has freed us, and it is for us not only to pray, but to labour and to give, that everywhere that word may have free course and be more abundantly glorified in the future than it has ever been throughout the history of its glorious past.

VI

The Church and the World in our Time¹

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—. . . It has seemed to me that I should do well to spend a portion of the time allotted to this address in fastening attention upon one topic, central enough, and vital enough, and fruitful enough for the whole Church to consider it with profit. In handling it, I would not for a moment attempt to do so dogmatically, or as one who speaks *ex cathedrâ*, but rather as desiring to throw out a few hints, which may fructify in the thoughts of our people during the present year and prove to be not without results when developed in very various ways by various minds in our various and complex church life.

There are perhaps few more important subjects claiming attention at this moment than *the relation between the Church and the world in our time*, especially the position of Methodism at the opening of a new century, in its relation to that strong current of secular thought and feeling which is so mightily moving our generation, and which threatens to carry

¹ Substance of opening address to the Conference in its Representative Session, held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 23rd July 1901. The opening paragraphs omitted refer to subjects of more immediate interest.

away before it many of the ancient landmarks of spiritual and religious life.

The question arises, Has Methodism, as it now is, spiritual power enough to do in the twentieth century what it was raised up to do in the eighteenth, and what by God's blessing it has so largely succeeded in doing in the nineteenth? Ours is only one among many Christian churches in this country, and this problem concerns all, is being deeply felt by all. But with the larger question, as it concerns other branches of the Christian Church, we are not now concerned. We have had a work of our own to do in the past, work differing from that of the Church of England, and from that of Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches, work the distinctive character of which I think we do well to preserve. Now the conditions of life have been greatly changing around us and within our borders. How do we stand to-day before God, before the world, before our own conscience, as regards the possession of the spiritual power necessary for doing our share of the work of regenerating and purifying the world?

The ordinary student of religious history in this country is not disposed to give a favourable answer to this question. We are told that the history of nearly every successful religious movement shows that after a period of early enthusiasm, of struggle, perhaps of persecution, there comes a period of prosperity, followed by deterioration and decay.

It was so in early Christianity, which before many centuries had passed settled down into a more or less formal ecclesiasticism; so that there is visible a humbling contrast between the age of the martyrs and the period after Christianity had been established

under Constantine as the religion of the Roman Empire. So it was with the monasticism of East and West, which began in religious zeal and ended in moral corruption. So again with Francis of Assisi and his Christlike brotherhood, who chose poverty as a bride, and after a time made the Mendicant Friars the byword and the scandal of the later Middle Ages. So to a great extent with Luther and the German Reformation, which in a hundred years had spent its primal force and so settled down into a Protestant scholasticism that its tide was rolled back by the stronger tide of the Counter-Reformation. So also, it is said, has it been with Wesley and the Evangelical revival. The early Methodist preachers were stoned and harried and imprisoned; Wesley himself was slandered, persecuted, mobbed—this, we are told, is the period of our true glory. Then comes the period of respectable mediocrity, in which we have for some time been comfortably reposing. Our zeal is spent; our best work, perhaps all our real work, is done. We exist and do no harm, possibly some mild good; but the primal religious impetus is exhausted, the reason for our existence is largely gone, and the vocation and power of Methodism as a religious force to influence the world has practically disappeared.

Are these things true? Is there any measure of truth in them? Our instinct is at once indignantly to deny them. It would not be at all difficult to meet and refute the cheap sneers of those who are willing now to praise the Methodism of the past, provided they are free to vilify the Methodism of the present. But for a moment, instead of putting ourselves into a pugilistic attitude and challenging all comers, let us inquire into the conditions under which the spiritual

work of Methodism has now to be carried on, the task which a truly spiritual church has now to do in the world, and our qualifications for doing it.

The general characteristics of our age are well known. I will not weary you by dwelling on them in detail. The startling advances made during the last half-century in our knowledge of the physical world; the correspondingly rapid progress in the mechanical arts; the steady increase in material comforts enjoyed after their measure by all classes of society; the national prosperity with which we have been blessed, through the industrial and commercial progress we have made during the last three generations—these are the commonplaces of conversation, so that it is generally admitted that a greater advance has been made in civilisation and in the arts and appliances of everyday life during the last fifty years than in many periods of the world's history extending over five hundred years.

The effect of all this upon national character is obvious. In many ways it has been beneficial, but material prosperity is always apt to be morally and spiritually lowering. Bacon reckons peace and prosperity among the causes of Atheism. Agur prayed that he might not be rich and deny God, as well as that he might not be poor and steal. In such times the love of money increases; much would have more. Self-indulgence relaxes the moral tone, as Capua enervated the hardy soldiers of Hannibal. Self-confidence, leading to unbelief, is one of the greatest foes of religion. Amusements multiply: their place in life at this moment looms portentously large. Expenditure has increased enormously, and the tendency in all classes to live above their income is growing.

Few can help remarking the disappearance of a certain simplicity of life characteristic of an earlier generation, together with a love of excitement, an impatience, or even horror of dulness, which marks young people especially. All these things and the like of these might be summed up in the current phrase—an increase of *worldliness*, perceptible to non-religious people who do not count worldliness a sin. It is almost exactly a hundred years since Wordsworth wrote—

The world is too much with us, late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

What Wordsworth would say were he here to-day we need not try to guess.

Let us not exaggerate these evils. It is useless to declaim against them. And surely it is wrong to denounce the very conditions of our life, as if society were crumbling to pieces, because wealth is more abundant and life easier than in the days of our forefathers. We have to distinguish things that differ; "world" is used in various senses. And many of these features of modern life which have been described are of themselves most valuable; they are good gifts of God, for which we should all be thankful, and it ill becomes the Church of Christ to stand on one side and rail at a condition of things so full of glorious and blessed opportunities. It is of no use to hold up pious hands in horror over a mighty advance in civilisation, or suppose that there is any virtue in poverty, ugliness, or barbarism.

No, but the Church of Christ must face the facts. She has always had to fight against "the course of this

world," in the most various shapes and aspects. Sometimes she has had to contend against terrible persecution, sometimes against scornful indifference, sometimes against aggressive infidelity. If the temptations of the world to-day are of another kind, it is for the Church to study them, to understand them, to master them. If by God's grace we overcame in the battles of adversity, we may hope for victory in the conflicts of another kind which prosperity brings with it. But we need to mark the dangers which lie so thick in the course of this strong current of our time, the sunken rocks and whirling eddies and that almost irresistible rush of custom and fashion and habit, whose strength is, all its waters flow one way. If indeed I should not rather compare it to that *Sudd* in the river Nile, of which we have heard so much of late—in which floating masses of tangled vegetation, gathering and conglomerating from all sides, become wedged into a dense barrier, which the strongest ships, with their sharp, cutting bows, cannot penetrate and pass. But the *Sudd* in the Nile stream has been cut, with no small difficulty, after months or even years of labour; what are we to say of the similar barriers in the way of the Church?

Let us remember that "worldliness" is one of the best abused words in the language. Of course we do not identify it with the conditions of that external life which individuals and communities alike must live, which all men and women must share, whether saints or sinners. It is not to be identified either with certain practices common in certain sections of "the world"—such as card-playing, dancing, theatre-going—though these may only too surely indicate its existence. Worldliness may be found in the office, or the mill, or the study; in the drawing-room or in the cottage; in

the State or in the Church ; even in the very family life of those peculiarly good people whose aim is specially to denounce it. The biographer of Dr. Dale tells us that when he died there lay on his study desk a sheet of an unfinished sermon with its last sentence—the last words that he wrote—broken off in the middle. The words are well worth remembering. “Unworldliness,” he says, “does not consist in the most rigid and conscientious observance of any rules of conduct, but in the spirit and temper, and in the habit of living, created by the vision of God, by constant fellowship with Him, by a personal and vivid experience of the greatness of the Christian redemption, by the settled purpose to do the will of God always, in all things, at all costs, and by the power of the great hope—the full assurance—that after our mortal years are spent, there is a larger, fuller, richer life in His immediate and eternal presence.”

If these words are true—and I wholly believe them—the ideal of unworldliness is not to be identified with the observance of rules, largely artificial, and necessarily varying from age to age, or even from country to country. We do not despise rules ; in a sense a good Methodist “lives by rule”—the method of the New Testament. But not by any formal barriers, or mere external rules, imposed from without —“Touch not, taste not, handle not”—can we effectively shut out the rising tide of worldly conformity. To a large extent we admit this in practice. We do not hold that the monastic is an ideal life, nor asceticism a synonym of virtue. We, with Milton, “cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not

without dust and heat." But we must go further, if the principle means anything at all.

We must teach our young people that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and show them the excellence of a religion which claims the beauty of life in all its gracious abundance, the rapture of growing knowledge, the use of developing powers, the charms of society, the fascinations of all pure earthly joys—for God who made both us and them. The Church of Christ does not exist to add to the Commandments or invent new sins; and she must never forget the immense difference between things wrong in themselves and things essentially harmless which may be abused and made evil. It is the part of Christ's Church not to scorn, despise, denounce the life that now is, but to claim, to win, to consecrate it all—a far more glorious, as it is certainly a far harder, task.

But it should never be forgotten that we must separate ourselves from the world if we are to save the world. The danger arises lest, as we gain in breadth, we lose in depth and secure extension of our borders at the expense of intensity of character. Religion in relation to life is to be both world-shunning and world-winning: and it needs to shun much that it may win all. Christ gives us a double figure to represent Christian influence—salt and leaven. Salt is the self-conserving power whereby we save ourselves and others from corruption; leaven is the self-communicating power by which the Church is to permeate, to assimilate, and to raise the world. And *if the salt have lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted?*

Methodism has its own special traditions and duties in this matter. The very ground of its existence at the outset was its attempt to raise the standard of Christian

life both in the Church and the world. Methodism separated itself from the world, not in the spirit of the Pharisee, but in the spirit of Christ. It separated itself from the world that it might help to purify the world; and, judged by the standard of secular history only, it is pronounced to have succeeded. Some of the old-time "rules of society" concerning food, dress, habits, may have been rendered obsolete in the course of years; the spirit which prompted them should never become obsolete. It is for the spirit, not the letter, that I plead; and words can hardly be made too strong, when one tries to urge on modern Methodists that above all things they should conserve spirituality of heart and life. May I not say—without suspicion of claiming more than is seemly for our community—*Noblesse oblige*? Noble birth imposes its own obligations. Our ancestry, our history, our traditions, our God-given successes, lay a special and honourable burden upon us in this matter, which every generation is bound in its turn to take up. If Methodism is not spiritual, it is nothing and worse than nothing. If Methodism were to lose its characteristic Christian savour of personal, heartfelt experience of religion, wherewith could it be salted?

Thank God, it has not lost its savour. Proofs that it is far from this pour in upon us every day. When our people are asked to pray, to testify, to evangelise, to give, there is a noble response. The proof of spiritual vitality manifest in the Methodism of the last twenty years are enough to make the very stones cry out in praise to the Lord and Giver of life.

Our work done? It is only just beginning. As we hear the story of the central missions in our large towns, the building of ever larger central halls

and the filling them as fast as they are built, the development of circuit life and organisation of our village work, the Settlements and Guilds, the noble provision for extension in the Twentieth Century Fund, we know that God has a great work for us to do in the new century, and that we are already getting well hold of it. Wesley's own work in the eighteenth century formed one stratum of bed-rock; another is to be found in the nineteenth in the building up of our organisation under the guidance of Dr. Bunting and one who is happily still amongst us, Dr. Rigg; and it does not need a very powerful lens to see what under God we are already laying down as the work of Methodism in the twentieth century. It does one's heart good, when the old chord is touched, to hear the old music ring out, true, full, sonorous—the best of all is, God is with us!

Still, any one who thinks that Methodism is in no danger from the spread of worldliness, must be blind indeed. And the remedy is not to be found where many would seek it, in the multiplication of special services. Nothing that I say must be understood as disparaging in the slightest degree such services in their own place. For example, the recent “Simultaneous Mission” of the Free Churches was blest to thousands. But the special must be special, or its character is gone. And tame routine, tempered by spasmodic excitement, does not spell health for the body corporate, but febrile weakness, such as prepares the way for more serious disease.

I wish to plead to-day for the steady maintenance of a high, but sober and practical, spiritual life—strong enough to resist the world in the darker sense of the word, and to win the world in the better sense. We

need the maintenance of a bright, healthy, cheerful Christian atmosphere, pervading the whole life, such as will prove itself essentially stronger, saner, more attractive than anything the world can produce. And this of a distinctively Methodist type. Not because we think ourselves better than others, but because God has given us from the beginning a certain joyful, warm-hearted, earnest type of Christian character, which it is our business to maintain and hand on, under the greatly altered conditions of society amidst which we live.

It is to be evangelical in character, but without the note of narrowness and lack of virility with which evangelicals have often been charged. Spiritual it will be, but not unreal; earnest, but not fanatical; broad, but not lax; attractive, but not easy-going; making its influence felt for righteousness, but not identified—as some crusades, nominally for righteousness, have been—with any sectarianism, cliqueism, or mere partisanship; drawing, not repelling, in the spirit of Him who came “not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

We are called to bear our testimony to this generation, and our success or failure in relation to prevailing worldliness will depend upon the measure of clearness, resonance, and vigour with which that testimony is given. If time permitted, I might show that such witness needs to be borne to—

1. *The reality of unseen verities.*—It is true that scientific materialism is losing the hold it had thirty years ago when Tyndall delivered his famous Belfast address. Physical science itself has analysed matter and resolved it into a number of centres of force, and behind Force is Mind, and behind Mind is Will, and

that which physical science declares to be an inscrutable energy, Religion, lifting the enshrouding veil, reveals as a Father's heart at the centre of the universe and controlling all to its circumference. But while scientific materialism is largely discredited, materialistic ways of thinking and feeling and judging have grown upon us, and against these a vigorous practical protest is needed.

2. *The value of Christian fellowship.*—The world is driving out of the churches the sense of spiritual comradeship. By their own confession—I could easily quote authorities—the Anglican, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian churches enjoy very little of the fellowship of experience. The conventional prevails in religion. The reserve which belongs to our national character gets the upper hand. Many like to belong to a church which commits them to nothing. But we as Methodists stand specially pledged to the supreme power of Christian experience as a cohesive influence, enabling men to feel together, think, pray, and act together. The charge made against the Evangelical revival, that it taught men to care for nothing but individual salvation, and that now Socialism and Collectivism flourish because the Church is not social enough, has never been true of Wesleyan Methodism. The class-meeting is the outward symbol of this cohesive power of spiritual fellowship; and though in form a human institution, has proved more than most a wonderfully accurate test of spiritual vitality. But it is the reality behind the institution that is important. The form of the meeting may change, but its spirit must be preserved. And the question is whether the spiritual force of Christian fellowship among us is mighty enough to conquer the mighty forces arrayed

against us under the changed conditions of our life. If it is, we succeed in our conflict with worldliness; but if not, we fail—and we are on our trial.

3. *The power of religion to leaven the world and not be leavened by it.* I am not one who believes that the Church has nothing to learn from the world. History teaches the contrary. Life is a big school, and it is part of God's plan to teach His Church by means of the pressure, the stimulus, the friction, the temptations of the life of the world. But if the Bible is true, we are the stronger. Christ has overcome the world, and our faith is to do the same. Can we as a church prove that we are the stronger, by virtue of the life that is in us? The name of that life is holiness, by which we often mean apartness from the evil that is around us. That is the negative side, most important in its place; but the positive side is an abiding spiritual health and vitality, which by its inherent excellence and energy realises all that is best in life and gathers all that is best in others around it.

There are one or two features of modern life on which I should like to have spoken which cause no slight searchings of heart, as to whether our religion does possess this superior magnetic force. I mean the alleged decline of family religion, the lessened sense of the sacredness of the Lord's day, and the multiplication of amusements apparently beyond all the power of the higher energies of life to limit or control them. I am not accepting as proved many sweeping statements that have obtained currency on these points, but the tendencies of the time in relation to them are only too patent. I must not stay to speak of these severally.

But as to *family religion*, let it be understood that it is not the observance of regular family worship that

is in question, highly important as that is; it is the decay of family religion. In many neighbourhoods there is, it is to be feared, very little family life worthy of the name. But no church can be in a healthy condition in which religion associated only with chapel and Sunday school is substituted for the bright, pure, happy atmosphere of a Christian family. Let us be "true to the kindred points of heaven and home."

Sunday observance is said to be rapidly decaying. The world is glad that work should cease for one day in the week, that it may be given to pleasure, not to worship. Then the Church becomes so far affected by the prevalent spirit that attendance at public worship is reduced to a minimum, and the hours at home are spent by young people in novel-reading and by others in lounging or sleep, while others find the hours to be dreary, and denounce "Sabbatarianism." I venture to think that these tendencies where they exist cannot be cured by making strict rules for "keeping Sunday." The strength of Puritanism lay not in its sourness, or its precisianism, but in the energy of principle behind and beyond these which made *men*. It is one test of the vitality of our religion whether it has power enough to get the Lord's day kept sacred by making it in our homes the brightest and happiest of all days—the "fruit of this, the next world's bud," the day on which "heaven's gate stands ope, blessings are plentiful and rife, more plentiful than hope."

Amusements are multiplying, we all know. Many rejoice, and there is ground for rejoicing. Many fear, and there is ground for apprehension. What is the attitude of the Church in relation to them? It is not the business of the Church to amuse, to provide pure, instead of questionable forms of amusement; that is

the work of Christians in their private capacity. But it would be well for Methodists to be known as those who enjoy the innocent pleasures of life and set their faces heartily not only against that which is bad, but against all that merely excites and dissipates, instead of refreshing and renewing the strength for work, against recreations which do not recreate, but sap the powers and lower the standard of life. Your guilds which combine the ramble on the Saturday with the devotional meeting on Friday, biblical study in the winter with a Swiss holiday in the summer—the devotional meeting being the best attended of all the weekly gatherings—are helping to show the world of the younger generation what true and healthy recreation means.

But leaving details, let us come back to the central theme, the maintenance of a type of Christian life which all the world shall acknowledge to be true, good, and beautiful. It is often said at the end of such addresses as this, "What we want is a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit." Most true; but let not the phrase become cant—*i.e.* so many words used without realisation of their true significance. What does a "baptism of the Holy Spirit" mean?

Perhaps we think of a marvellous revival and many conversions; and God knows we need that. Perhaps we think of some sudden visitation of the Church, almost compelling to fuller consecration; and God knows we need that. Perhaps we think of a strange, mystic breathing from on high upon our individual life, a supernatural seizing and swaying of our nature under Divine influence; and ah! how that is needed to-day! But the Holy Spirit is not a wayward, casual, arbitrary visitor. He is to abide in the Church; and He does

so abide precisely in proportion to our readiness and fitness to entertain such a guest. And His abiding means just this—the calm, even, powerful maintenance of a life, a type of life manifestly seen to be not of earth, though the fairest thing on earth—a flower of which all the world must recognise the beauty, though it is obliged to confess it cannot raise the seed. A “spirit-bearing Church,” to use the old phrase of Ignatius and the early Fathers, is sure to overcome the world, by attracting its interest, impressing its conscience, winning its allegiance, and bringing it to own and serve its true Lord.

A true Methodist is *not*, as he has been represented, a crank, a fanatic, a hole-and-corner sectarian, nor, according to a common caricature, a smug religionist, his lips full of unctuous phrases, whose vulgar tastes in religion, as in life, offend the delicate susceptibilities of the refined.

A true Methodist *is* a spiritually minded man or woman belonging to one branch of Christ’s Church Catholic—it has been said the largest branch in the Protestant English-speaking world; I only say, not the smallest—one who has learned heaven’s secrets by heart-felt experience, who lives in the world but is not of it, using, not abusing, its wonderful resources and beauty, its knowledge and power; with a purer and happier home than most, with a more wholesome though less eager enjoyment of life’s best pleasures, with a serene and steadfast heart in time of trouble; one who, as Wesley said, is striving to love God with heart and mind and soul and strength, and his neighbour as himself.

Such were our fathers; such are multitudes among us to-day; such may we all be, and help those coming

after us to be! The God of our fathers is with us; may He make the Methodists of the twentieth century to be as earnest and devoted in service as they were, and even more successful in the work of winning for Christ the world which He died to redeem!

VII

The Teaching Office of the Church¹

MY DEAR BRETHREN,— . . . It seems to me that on an occasion like the present, at the first Conference of a new century, meeting as it does for the first time in a new order of sessions, your President should be prepared, not indeed to deliver a dissertation, but still to utter something more than the common-places which may be supposed to belong to a formal opening of our Pastoral Session. Such an address should certainly not be controversial, but you will not take it amiss if what I say does not precisely commend itself to the judgment of all, provided it express, as I desire to make it, thoughts which have for some time been pressing on my own mind and heart for utterance.

I propose, then, to speak to the five hundred ministers, more or less, who constitute the Pastoral Session of this Conference, not as to a public meeting, but as to brethren, upon a topic that intimately concerns us all—the teaching office of the Church; that is, as it applies to Wesleyan Methodism at the opening of the twentieth century.

Needless to say, this implies no disparagement of other functions of the Christian ministry—evangelistic

¹ Substance of address at the opening of the Pastoral Session of the Conference, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 30th July 1901.

and pastoral work. But it so happens that there are reasons just now why the doctrinal side of our work should be specially considered. As a matter of fact, it usually receives very little attention in our assemblies. In the Minutes of the early Conferences you will have noticed how large a portion of the discussion turned upon points of doctrine, especially Justification and Sanctification, topics at that time of primary importance. We should only be following the example of Wesley and the early Methodist preachers if in our ministers' meetings and synods and conferences we spent more time upon such aspects of doctrine as from time to time prove to be specially important in their bearing upon current thought and practice.

In thus referring to "doctrine," it must not be supposed that the word is used in a technical sense, or that I desire to bring before you any dogmas of the schools or to discuss points in systematic theology. Nothing could be more out of place here and now. But I can make my object clearer if you allow me to approach it somewhat gradually.

We have lately taken formally and openly the name of the Wesleyan Methodist "Church," though for long we had actually occupied the position of a branch of Christ's Church in this country and performed the functions of a true church. But as we have more directly claimed the name and the privileges, so we must be careful that we discharge the responsibilities of such a position. Are we doing so as regards our teaching—that is, in the large and various application of Christian knowledge to Christian life? We are earnest in evangelisation, we have—it may perhaps be said without impropriety—learned how to preach so as

to interest and profit congregations of various types; but are we doing our full duty in *teaching* those committed to our charge?

For we have lately been somewhat sharply reminded as a nation of the importance of knowledge. The Englishman is supposed not to care much for knowledge for its own sake; utilitarian and practical in everything, he values knowledge for what it can do. But in two chief departments of the life of the State, War and Commerce, we have been reminded of late that knowledge is of the first importance. That for lack of it, a nation possessing in its citizens perhaps the finest material in the whole world for enterprise, courage, staying power; a nation richer perhaps than any other in proportion to its numbers, with sea-power unapproached and at present unapproachable, may have its position decidedly and awkwardly challenged. And in the Church it is easy enough to disparage knowledge as an abstract and comparatively useless element in religious life, pertaining mainly to colleges, students, and professors. But Methodism, both in this country and America — I speak not without considerable opportunity of judging — while possessing many God-given advantages, will find its progress very seriously hampered and its work marred and impermanent in character, if it fail, not only to add to faith virtue, but to virtue to add knowledge.

I need do no more than touch upon the well-known fact that many and serious changes have been taking place during the last quarter of a century in regions of thought bearing upon religion, and in all probability changes at least as great will take place during the first quarter of the twentieth century. These changes have been gradual and silent, but not on that account

the less, rather the more significant and abiding. I can but hint at some of these.

1. The whole *view of the world and life* has been changing, and that not for thinkers and students only. Have there not been deep and significant changes in our views of creation—in relation to the origin, formation, and history of our world; in the application of the principle of evolution to different departments of life; in our views of the reign of law and its bearing on miracle; in the relation between God and the world and the doctrine of the Divine immanence; in the whole subject of the seen and unseen worlds, and the relation between the present and the future life? These are only a few topics amongst many that might be named, in which there has been no sudden and catastrophic overturning of established beliefs, but a gradual, quiet, yet very thorough revolution in men's whole way of looking at things. This change affects not only the technical studies of scientific professors, but literature at large; not only scholars at the Universities, but, in their measure, the teachers of children in primary schools. It has affected women as well as men—the mothers of the generation to come; and when you touch these, you touch the very fount of national life. How these changes affect religious doctrine I will not now discuss; enough that we have in these considerations one proof of the need of special care and equipment among the teachers of the Church.

2. *The Bible*.—Any modifications of belief which affect this sacred Book touch us yet more closely; and perhaps nowhere in the religious world is change more noticeable than in views of the Bible. The examination and inquiry to which our sacred books have been subjected have not, thank God, at all substantially changed

the position of the Bible in our midst, or the reverence with which it should be and is regarded. Its sacredness is not impaired, as we have come to understand the character of the Book better; rather has it been increased among those who have studied it most closely. But there has been unquestionably a change in the *way* in which it is regarded, and the *kind* of authority which it once possessed has been modified for many minds, so that it cannot be appealed to precisely as it was a generation ago. Different opinions are held as to the extent to which this process has actually been carried, still more as to the legitimacy of the process by which the change has been effected. But on any account of the matter, and whatever views be held concerning biblical criticism, what a demand is made for knowledge, wisdom, and judgment on the part of the Christian teacher of to-day!

3. *The Church*.—If we go back only some five-and-thirty years since I first entered this ministry, what a change has taken place in the relative positions of Christian churches in this country! What a spread of “Anglo-Catholic” ideas, as they are called in the Church of England; what a different tone observable on the part of the clergy towards Nonconformist communities, in the ground taken up, the arguments used, the pressure exerted. On the other hand, we see a closer approximation to one another amongst the Free Churches themselves; the formation of a Federation which grows in power every year. These, with other kindred features of contemporary church life, are familiar to us all. My immediate point is this only: surely the position of Methodism has been affected on all sides by these changes; are we, then, fully prepared to meet them? Do we fully appreciate our own relation

to these movements around us? Have we the knowledge requisite rightly to steer our own way amidst these currents, and are we sufficiently teaching our own young people, that they may know how to defend their own position on the one side against unwarrantable ecclesiastical assumptions, and on the other against those who would minimise or explain away ecclesiastical and doctrinal distinctions, merging all in the convenient but quaking and dangerous morass of "unsectarian" Christianity. Knowledge and careful teaching are assuredly amongst the first requisites of a church which like our own abhors and avoids extremes, if it is to choose its own path with intelligence and fill its providential place among the churches during the coming century.

Now it is for the pastors of Wesleyan Methodism to consider these questions. Are they adequately considered in our united councils? They are often pondered by each of us separately, and they are privately discussed with advantage, but when we meet in ecclesiastical conclave we are soon told that we have "other things to do." Doubtless, nor am I foolish enough to imagine that duties of immediate practical importance are to be postponed to the consideration of abstract questions. I am but putting in a plea for a side of our work to which scant justice is sometimes rendered. In this connection it may surely be said, "These things should we have done, but not as to leave the other undone."

Will it be out of place if I offer to my brethren a few suggestions which in better hands than mine may prove fruitful? If the teaching office of the Church among us is to be satisfactorily carried on during the next generation, we must consider

I. THE SUPPLY OF MINISTERS.

Lord Rosebery said the other day that "the first need of this country is the need of men." He explained his meaning thus: that the Empire had greatly and rapidly increased, and with it the demand for first-rate men, or as near first-rate as may be, to superintend its work and carry on its institutions all over the world. But, he added, "the supply of such men is almost stationary." It needs little proving that a similar demand is now being made upon Christian churches. In our own, increased claims are continually being made upon circuit ministers, the pulpit claims being higher than ever, whilst duties of all kinds outside the pulpit become every year more numerous. There are special demands in the fields of literature and scholarship. It may well be questioned whether we as a church are doing our share in the department of Christian scholarship, as compared, for example, with the United Free Church of Scotland. The whole work of evangelism has wonderfully developed amongst us the last twenty years, and the one lesson we have learned is that it requires men of the very highest and best type we can spare for it. Every one can see that the work of foreign missions makes special demands upon our home ministry, because our missionaries are increasingly the superintendents and directors of others, even young men bearing a weight of responsibility which we should not dream of imposing upon men of the same age at home.

So much for demand: has the supply kept pace with it? It will be at once replied that this is not a question of supply and demand, as in political economy or commercial relationships. True; even a statesman

would say as much of civil servants, much more does the Church of Christ make this reply, and in a much deeper sense of the words. Supply to meet such a demand cannot be raised by mere human efforts; for such provision of men fit for the high tasks of the ministry we depend on the Holy Spirit. If the labourers in the harvest are few, Christ does not say that more are to go out, but, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send more labourers into His harvest."

Most true and most pertinent. Yet it is also true that the Church is bound, in this as in all matters, to use such means as are within her reach. In no department is the Church bidden to pray and remain entirely passive. She is to pray as if all depended on her prayers, and to labour as if all depended on her labours. God only can send the labourers; we must see that they go. Surely pastors in every congregation may get and keep a friendly hold of educated young men who are members of the Church by the exercise of personal influence; give them employment in various departments of church work, to try their aptitude; seek as far as may be to recruit the ranks of lay preachers from all classes of suitable candidates; and watch carefully to see how far amongst these the Spirit of God is at work, or likely to be at work, to prompt them to give their lives to the ministry and delicately and sympathetically to remove possible stumbling-blocks out of the way.

Such work as this is not only open to the pastor, it is his duty, though it must always be reverently and cautiously undertaken. God will assuredly honour the fidelity of His Church shown in these and similar ways. I believe we have now in our midst material of a very valuable kind, of which we are not making the best

use; so that without anything like immediate pressure, which would certainly be unwise and in many cases would be morally wrong, the ranks of the ministry might be recruited during the next ten or twenty years by the addition of many who would render lasting service to the Church of Christ at home and abroad.

II. THE CHOICE AND TRAINING OF MINISTERS.

There is the less need to enlarge upon this topic at the moment because it is already being considered in the Representative Session, to which in some aspects it belongs. But some of the most important aspects of it chiefly concern us as ministers, and it might be well if ere long we considered the question whether improvement might not be effected in the modes by which candidates for the ministry are dealt with in the various stages of their candidature and a selection made amongst them for acceptance by the Conference. So with the large subject of college training, on which I believe a careful report will be presented, if not this year, in twelve months' time.

It may well be said, however, that in this matter of training we can only hold our own by advancing. A moderate average of attainment, a fatal mediocrity of ministerial ability, will not suffice in these days. In the army weapons of precision are found to be necessary, and though our weapons are not carnal, they must not be obsolete in type or ineffective in character, but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. God has done wonderful work in the past by uneducated or half-educated men, as they are called; but it must be remembered that there are many schools in which men can be educated besides that of books. Methodism

always has welcomed, always will welcome, such to her ranks, when they show that they possess God-given power for the true evangelisation of men. But if a growing church like ours is to do *all* the work intrusted to her, the teaching office of the ministry must be carefully studied and the teachers improved.

This is not simply a question for the colleges. Most of us have felt all the way through our ministry how much we have needed to be ourselves more fully taught of God, that we might teach others; and some of us, after more than thirty years' service, feel our need not less, but more keenly than ever.

The brotherhood of the Wesleyan Methodist ministry is, I verily believe, one of the noblest on earth; the longer I have known it, the more proud I have become that in any sense I belong to it. Especially is this true of men whose names are not prominently before the public, but whose patient and self-denying toil in obscure places has fitted them for the highest posts, though they may never reach them. As preachers, as evangelists, as men of business, as friends and guides of the people who constitute their flocks, this band of Wesleyan Methodist ministers could not easily be matched.

But as teachers, might we not be and do more? I am not pleading for "culture," literary allusions in sermons, Scripture pedantry of any kind, but for downright hard thinking and careful teaching—a mastery of the Bible, a deep, spiritual insight into the human heart and human life, and a determination that the ministry should not only be attractive and interesting, but helpful and instructive in the best sense; so calculated not to puff up, but to build up, that any ordinary hearer of an ordinary minister should feel

sure that if he missed a service in the ordinary course he would miss a meal. Many in our congregations to-day are hungry for this kind of food; and in those who are not, the appetite may readily be created. And surely an hour or two might be devoted occasionally in our Pastoral Sessions to the consideration of topics like these, without its being said that time so spent is "wasted"?

III. THE ADAPTATION OF TEACHING TO CURRENT NEEDS.

This is a topic requiring a volume, not a sub-section of an address. You will understand that I have named it only with the view of making a passing suggestion or two which may be of use here or there. For while in the last analysis the needs of every generation are the same and the essential work of the minister does not need to be "adapted" to meet passing fashions of thought, still every minister must understand the times in which he lives if he is to serve his own generation in the best way.

I read the other day this statement made by a responsible writer: "The men of our time are more separated from those whose education ended in 1850 than any previous generation from its predecessors." Is that true, or does it approach the truth? Then what follows for religion and theology? Not the preaching of a new gospel; there is none, none is needed, nor could we receive or preach a new one. Not a "reconstruction" of theology, because to reconstruct in this case is to destroy. But it may well be that a *restatement of old truth* is needed. And for this reason, if for no other, that a living faith should clothe itself

in living language, and a considerable part of the phraseology current (say) a century ago is decaying, while some of it is dead, in the sense that it fails to convey the full meaning intended to the ears of those brought up under very different conditions. No "originality" is needed, as if men could now make new discoveries in religion, or were to receive a new revelation; but it is necessary that if the truth preached in our pulpits is to be a gospel indeed, one for the men of to-day to live by and die by, every part of it must have passed afresh through the mint of the preacher's own mind and heart and utterance, and the old pure gold be fashioned into current coin to meet current needs.

We often hear a plea for the *Simplification of Theology*. If that phrase means the abandonment of theological thought upon important questions, and the settling down to superficial habits to suit hasty and shallow minds, it means not progress but retrogression. For the thinker, theology should mean more than it has done, not less; whilst the best hearers do not really desire that doctrine should be made "easy," in the sense of having nothing to think about. Many so-called "uneducated" people in our congregations are far better able to cope with theological problems than others who pride themselves on their culture. Nor should the simplification of theology mean the relinquishment of important positions of orthodoxy, as if every item of doctrine thrown overboard lightened the ship and helped her on her course, or represented a gain for those who wish to advance.

But if simplification means that the teacher has acquired a thorough mastery of the whole field of doctrine, and acquired the power which only a master possesses, of being able to distinguish between truths

of primary and of secondary importance, to keep each in their own place, to concentrate upon the most important and not identify every detail in a complex faith with its essence, so that the whole of Christianity is represented as crumbling or in ruins if each particular item is not taught exactly as it used to be, then I believe the sooner we simplify the better. Only the best teachers can simplify well and effectively; therefore let us be amongst the best.

But the word I would use and emphasise is not simplification, but *Vitalisation*. When an organism is alive and in health, each part does its own work in its own place, and the distinction between primary and secondary does not arise. And as I believe the whole of religious teaching needs continually to be revived, so I rejoice to see abundant signs in our midst that this work is being done, and we may believe that it will go steadily on in the new century. We shall best show what orthodoxy means, not by insisting on the exact curves of certain boundary-lines of dogma, but by digging ever more and more deeply into the heart of the old doctrine, understanding it better ourselves and assimilating it afresh; then we shall be able to revitalise it by making it more human, more timely, and more practical.

Methodism has its own calls and opportunities in this matter. We need not compare ourselves with other churches. It may be said, however, in passing, that while the Anglican Church is moving in the direction of laying greater emphasis than hitherto upon church, priest, and sacraments; while the Congregationalist claims to have a special mission to the intellectual, and the Salvation Army represents a direct attempt of a demonstrative type upon the

religious emotions, we reflect on none, criticise none, desire to imitate none of these. Wesleyan Methodism has its own work to do—laying emphasis on personal, vital, religious experience, and gathering men and women by means of such experience into true fellowship, for the purposes both of edification and aggression. May not this religious experience, however, be made more truly and deeply thoughtful; and must it not be so, if in these days it is to stand firm and influence others? May it not be our function in a greater degree than in the past to provide a bridge between soul and intellect? Is it not one of our tasks in the opening of a new century to strengthen ourselves and help others precisely at that point? We need not subtract one ounce of our devotion to evangelistic enterprise or pastoral care and attention. But we cannot be blind to the fact that we as a church have hitherto been much more successful in gathering in members than in keeping them when gathered—which means that knowledge has not always kept pace with zeal, nor wisdom with earnestness.

Wesley and our fathers splendidly met the specific needs of their own times. Wesley did not deal with the difficulties of the sixteenth century or the seventeenth, but the eighteenth, and he did not meet them with seventeenth-century weapons. His successors had to deal with the Georgian and early Victorian periods. "Humanity," said Pascal, "is a man who lives and learns for ever." We are going on to live and learn; and, unless I am much mistaken, it will be for the twentieth century to construct out of the materials gathered and discoveries made in the latter half of the nineteenth. I have not spoken of primary, secondary, or university education, and a number of related topics.

Addressing ministers, I have been referring to the responsibilities of ministers, which are in themselves great and serious enough in all conscience. Brethren, it is ours to lead and guide and teach a great and increasing body of faithful Christians, and influence our generation in and through them.

Who is sufficient for these things? God alone. How much more than sufficient He is, we know. How sufficient He waits to make us, if we would but let the tide of Divine grace, of religious knowledge, of spiritual strength flow through us, as even now it waits to enter in a larger, more abundant flow! St. Paul says, in 2 Corinthians iii., "He has made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant." In that single phrase lie all aptitudes, all enlightenment, all insight, all timeliness of utterance, all power to convince the conscience, to remove obstacles, to illumine the understanding, persuade the will, touch the susceptibilities of thousands—to draw, win, lead, save souls! Faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it.

He will do more if we will do more. Whether we could mark this first united Pastoral Session of a new century by a new departure, it is not for me to say. If we resolved henceforth to devote a portion of our time, not only to a desultory "conversation on the state of the work of God," but to a close grappling with some current needs in matters of faith and doctrine, the time so "lost" might prove to have been gained ten times over.

But in any case we may give ourselves afresh to the noblest work ever intrusted to man, so that by a fresh touch of the Divine Hand we may be made "sufficient" for the pressing needs of this present time. The hour is even now striking, and those who have ears can hear

its solemn call. May He who rules all the hours prepare the men needed to accomplish His great work, and us as Wesleyan Methodist ministers to fulfil our part in the teaching office of the Church in the new conditions that lie before us!

VIII

Called to be Saints¹

AT the close of a series of interesting and important meetings we gather for prayer, for spiritual intercourse, and communion at the table of the Lord.

All the meetings of this council, we would fain hope, and all the business meetings of all the churches represented here, form part of the Lord's work, as they certainly are intended to advance His kingdom. Yet it is not without a sense of relief that some of us turn from the many things about which we are apt to be "cumbered" to that one thing needful, the good part which we love best, and which cannot be taken away from us.

If only the voices of those who now speak might be in some sense a channel for the voice of the Master Himself! Whether that be so or not depends not so much on the words spoken, which must be human and imperfect, as on the sincerity and aspiration of spirit which ought to animate speakers and hearers alike. Then, as in the bread and wine we discern the body and blood of Christ, so in the communion of our spirits we shall realise the inworking of the Divine Spirit,

¹ A devotional address delivered at the annual meeting of the National Free Church Council held in Bradford, 13th March 1902.

and the presence of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the ages."

An address such as this is only intended to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and is submitted with all deference to you, my brethren, who understand better than I do what are the privileges and responsibilities of our Christian calling. But I have thought it might be suitable to ask the question, Does the life of the Free Churches in this country to-day sufficiently nourish, and is it adequately producing, the saintly character? You will remember the challenge thrown down by Newman to his Anglican friends, and his assertion that Anglicanism does not "produce saints" as does the true Church Catholic, *i.e.* the Church of Rome. The Church of England has indeed always prided herself on the safeness, sanity, sobriety, rather than the earnestness of her religious temper, so that one of her eminent sons felt free to charge her the other day with having always "quenched enthusiasm"; adding very significantly that "there is nothing more deadly than complacent failure." But what of those whom she calls Nonconformists who call themselves Free Churches? We of Puritan, of Covenanting ancestry, of Methodist blood—do we "breed" men and women who may be easily and indubitably recognised as saints? Do we produce them in sufficient numbers, and of a sufficiently high and devoted type, to make it obvious to the world that our Christianity is of the truest and purest kind? Is sainthood characteristic of our communities?

I have put the question, but I have no intention of answering it categorically. The word "saint" has first to be defined, and types of sanctity vary almost indefinitely. But there is no avoiding the New Testa-

ment phrase, descriptive of church members as such—"called to be saints"; or rather, "saints by way of calling" or Divine designation. This is as much a name of early Christians as "the faithful," "the elect," "the brethren," or those who belong to "the way." Even in Corinth, that church marked by brilliant gifts and low ethical standard, amongst the generous but fickle Galatians, in Ephesus, which had left her first love, and in Sardis and Laodicea, with little more than the name to live, Christians are "called to be saints," not as named such, nor as summoned to be such, but as marked out by God for that high end; and if they came short of that calling it was to their own shame and possible ruin. Few more searching questions could be addressed to any Federation or Council of the Christian churches than to ask how this ideal is being realised. Few more fatal admissions could be made than to allow that while all kinds of meetings are held and speeches made, while many very respectable and admirable characters are being produced in the numerous churches represented, the number of "saints" growing up in our midst is small.

For one, I do not believe that the number is small. I hold and think I could prove that thousands—yes, tens of thousands—of nameless saints from our midst are helping to heal the world around us to-day. Whether the number of these is as large as it ought to be, and the type as high as might fairly be expected, is another question. There can be no doubt that many shrink from the very mention of the word "saint," because, like the name "gentleman," it has been "defamed by charlatan and soiled by all ignoble use." We shrink from any approach to the sanctimonious or Pharisaic on the one hand, and on the other we protest

against the way in which the Church of Rome has narrowed down the meaning of "saint," as she has narrowed down "religious" to mean monastic, and "Catholic" to mean Romanist. Free churchmen of to-day are rightly anxious to avoid all unreality in religion, all attempts to "wind ourselves too high for sinful man below the sky," and those who most nearly approach the saintly standard are most afraid of any application of the word to themselves.

But none of these things must interfere with the test laid down in the New Testament—a church whose members are not saints in the true sense of the word does not deserve to be called a branch of the true Church of Christ. Nothing can abrogate the fundamental principle that the life of every Christian must be a life "apart," when the meaning of apartness is properly explained. There is no distinction in this respect between ministers and laymen, for the character in question does not depend upon the kind of duties performed, but on the spirit in which they are performed. Nay, it might perhaps be said that the highest type of sainthood may well be looked for amongst those who are bound to mingle most fully in the life of the world, because their fidelity is greater and their conquest more consummate in proportion as their conflict is more severe—like those anonymous heroes of earliest Christendom, holy in perhaps the foulest den of abominations the world has ever known—saints in Caesar's household. Not taken out of the world, but kept from its evil—that is the definition of Christian sainthood as the Master has given it; and its ritual is not the hearing of masses and telling of beads, but "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world."

The present Bishop of Oxford has recorded it of his father-in-law, the late Dean Church, "He was detached from many things that entangle men; he seemed ready to detach himself from more, and with him peculiarly one felt how the stronghold of a true man's life is not near the frontier, but somewhere far away, remote and lonely and aloft." And again, "He seemed to bear about with him a certain hidden, isolating, constraining, and ennobling fear, which quenched the dazzling light of many things that attract most men: a fear which would have to be clean got rid of before time-serving or unreality could have a chance with him."

I do not say that description gives the very keynote of saintliness, but it breathes the inmost spirit, the quintessence of unworldliness, and constitutes a long step on the way to sainthood. And I have chosen this illustration rather than refer to Augustine, or Bernard, or À Kempis, because R. W. Church was a man of our own time and not of our communities, a Dean of St. Paul's, a man of influence and affairs, a man encompassed by the encumbrances and restrictions and difficulties which beset an ecclesiastic of an "Established" church. And ministers and members of any Christian community may well ask themselves how far they are able to preserve such a serene and noble aloofness of spirit in the midst of engrossing business, and so to deserve, though they never would claim, the name of saint.

There is no need in this audience to insist upon the commonplace that the type of saintliness which realises most fully the spirit of Christ is that which is perfected in the active life of the world. Mr. Hugh Black, in his book on *Culture and Restraint*, which

many of you have probably been reading, resolves in a truly Christian fashion the antinomy between the self-expression of culture and the self-repression of asceticism. He points out that the solution is to be found in that service to others for the advancement of the kingdom of God which is the very note of Christianity. Self-denial is justified as one of the highest forms of self-culture, and "self-culture can always be justified when inspired by love."

There is no paradox in Wordsworth's sonnet on Milton: "Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart. . . . And yet thy heart the lowliest duties on itself did lay." Or, as C. Wesley puts it, Christlike life is best realised "'twixt the mount and multitude," the sublime intercourse of the mount preparing for activity amongst the multitude, and service among the multitude realising the aspirations of the communion on the mount. There are, as Mr. Black says, so many forms of Christian service of man that room is left for an infinite variety in the types of saint.

This is all true, and represents perhaps the fullest truth of the matter. But in every generation and every Christian community accepting these principles there will be found tendencies against which men need to be on their guard, which lower the standard of personal religious life, vulgarise the type of Christian service, and make the name of saint to sound woefully inapplicable. And I am venturing to suggest that the gregariousness of our time needs to be counter-balanced by an additional touch of aloofness—not from life, not from active duty, not from service, but partly from the spirit of the age and partly from the prevailing spirit of some churches and some church leaders. Souls, like stars, can never be common. But

it is possible for all Christians to drink more directly from the fountainhead in the everlasting hills, and less from the same water when it has lost its freshness and purity amongst the lower ranges or in the marshy flats of the plains below.

Walter Scott said—and he of all men was no ascetic—“Solitude is to character what space is to the tree. If the question were raised of eternal company without the power of retiring into oneself, I would say, ‘Turnkey, lock the cell.’” But it is no cell into which the saint retires, but a sanctuary, a palace, a banqueting hall, in which the very highest communion is possible—“Thou wilt keep me secretly in Thy pavilion from the strife of tongues.”

Flawless clarity of motive, of method, of aim—in these three how much of the saintly spirit is summed up! Absolute singleness of eye, simplicity of purpose, the moral and spiritual transparency of “souls that never have secrets to hide from one another or from heaven—these are our holiest!” Purity of method as well as of motive. Why should the ecclesiastic so often be regarded as the very antipodes of the saint? None of us hold the deadly doctrine that the end justifies the means. But there is hardly a church in Christendom entirely free from the suspicion that many who direct her affairs have a blind eye which they turn upon the means adopted, if only the sacred ends of the Church may be secured. Hence a certain coarsening and hardening of spirit in the conduct of church affairs which takes the bloom from the fruit and delicacy from the petals of the flower; and the reputation of those concerned in church management too often is that they are able men, certainly; good men, of course; but saints?—No.

An eminent writer of our time was discussing lately whether a very good man could be a hero of drama. He came to the conclusion that he could not, because the drama is essentially active, while the saint is passive ; the drama deals with emotions, and the saint is a man who has subdued emotion ; while in a drama, again, an audience expects an exhibition of mastery or force which would be out of place in an exceptionally good man. With the laws of the stage I have nothing to do, but as regards the drama of life, the above criticism is full of mistakes. It rests upon a shallow, inadequate conception of goodness, a pale, effete simulacrum of the vigorous reality. Rightly understood, there is no hero like the saint. The very aloofness of spirit for which I am pleading constitutes the one secret of exceptional courage, activity, and power. It is the "commonness," the commonplaceness of our spirits which makes the term saint seem so terribly out of place ; the fact that we live too much in our own and one another's atmosphere, breathing and rebreathing often-breathed and therefore devitalised air, and are too little familiar with the rarer and ampler ether of God's high places, and the upper reaches of the Delectable Mountains. A saint soon dwindles, peaks, and pines without his native mountain air.

One word there is which inspires the Christian who knows himself to be unworthy the name of saint, but who desires to know more of its meaning. It is the word which we have upon our lips as we draw near to the Lord's table—which we have always in our hearts—the cross. This it is through which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. The cross of Christ mortifies only those members which are upon the earth—sadly many and sorely strong ! It vivifies and

reinforces the best self, the real self. He that loseth the lower life finds the higher for evermore. The cross of Christ destroys none of the elements of earthly life that are worth preserving, but its searching fire purifies the whole, making all the green wood that burns so slowly, even the stones and dust that are in the trench round the altar, to be fuel to its sacred flame.

The cross a burden? Yes, as Samuel Rutherford says, as much a burden as sails are to a ship, as wings to a bird! The cross of Christ, and it alone, makes of a sinner a saint!

Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

IX

Preaching in Relation to Modern Unbelief¹

MY hesitation in addressing a number of my brethren upon a subject which many of them are more competent to handle than I am, is lessened by the fact that it is not mainly of my own choosing. It has been proposed to me in various ways, orally and by correspondence, so that I am fully persuaded that a treatment of it by some one is desirable, and there can at least be no objection to my introducing the subject to your attention that you may have the opportunity afterwards of conversing upon it. Your practical experience will prove more illuminating than my abstract discussion of principles, but we may hope that the two united may be of service to us all.

I. It is necessary at the outset to define somewhat exactly the scope of the subject, for the title is sufficiently vague, and it is susceptible of meanings which cannot be included in our present investigation.

Modern unbelief is an indefinite phrase. It might include disbelief, or "infidelity," understood to mean a denial of religious truth marked by more or less of an aggressive spirit. The man who says in his heart

¹ Substance of an address delivered at the London Ministers' Meeting, Wesley's Chapel, 9th December 1901, and at the Bristol Ministers' Meeting, 7th April 1902.

there is no God is described in Scripture as a "fool," but the nature of his "folly" varies according to the tone in which he speaks. He may say "there is no God" with a light laugh, and show himself to be a flippant fool; or with a cold sneer, and show himself to be a bitter and arrogant fool; or with hot denunciation, and show himself to be a blind and angry fool; or he may utter the bold words with a brazen brow and a secret fear, and thus show himself to be a fool both insincere and wicked. We as ministers have occasionally to meet with specimens of all these kinds of folly, which are never entirely absent from any generation. They make us sometimes weep and sometimes laugh, and sometimes do both together. But express Atheism is a comparatively rare phenomenon in our experience, and we are not now concerned with it.

Again, a less decided and aggressive form of practical Atheism is characterised by utter religious indifference. Such men don't believe, because they don't care. It needs character and interest and effort to "believe" where such great themes and stupendous issues are concerned, and not to be active in this matter is not to be simply passive. A condition of moral indifference tends to produce intellectual atrophy, and it is to be feared that such "indifference" is greatly on the increase. A popular writer said the other day, "Elsmere-throes are out of date." The pangs with which Robert Elsmere is represented as having been compelled to give up the faith in which he was cradled are strange to a generation which experiences no wrench in surrendering what it has never cared to keep. We need not discuss how far such a state of mind is spreading, for while our preaching may occasionally have such

utterly godless persons in view, it is not for the most part concerned with them.

Again, the word "sceptic" is often used to describe a man who cannot make up his mind on the great questions of religion. Sceptic is not a name which such a man chooses for himself; he prefers to be called a "free-thinker" or one who professes "liberal" opinions. I would give to any man the name he prefers for himself, though "free-thinker" is a sadly misleading and question-begging epithet. But for our present purposes "sceptics" or "free-thinkers" must be divided into two classes, according to whether they are willing or unwilling sceptics, constructive or destructive unbelievers. If they are satisfied with their position and disposed to defend it on an Agnostic or similar basis, then of course a minister who is brought into relation with them ought to be interested in them and help them, if possible. But in view of our present subject they may be disregarded, and it is questionable whether many such will be found in our congregations, though they may often be members of families which are at least nominally Christian.

We may also disregard the somewhat large class of cavillers who feel and make the most of small difficulties, or raise them, whether they feel them or not. We need not excessively trouble ourselves over the man who wishes to know who was Cain's wife, what happened when Joshua made the sun to stand still, or how we shall know one another in heaven. Such inquirers are generally young, sometimes simple, often only silly. It is good, as the wise man says, not to answer a fool according to his folly; it is also good, as the same wise man says, to answer a fool according to his folly. Luther did the latter when, asked what

God was doing before the creation, he answered, "Cutting twigs in the wilderness to chastise children who ask foolish questions." Cavillers do not give a wise pastor much trouble.

II. Narrowing down our subject, therefore, we find ourselves concerned with those who do not so much deny the faith as come short of it; those who are not only "honest doubters," but more or less anxious to reach a more satisfactory position; those who are more or less unconsciously affected by the atmosphere of religious uncertainty and inquiry prevailing in our time. And the questions arise, What are the facts of our time in relation to this class of persons? Are there many? Many amongst our own families? Many attending our churches? How far does such doubt extend, to what parts of religious creed does it chiefly apply? How much does it amount to—hesitation, inquiry, misgiving, or something more serious? What class or classes of persons are affected—the educated or uneducated, younger or older, men or women—and why? When we have tried to answer some of these questions we shall be better prepared to ask how best we may meet our hearers' difficulties and what kind of preaching is most adapted for the purpose.

Any man of sense will hesitate to give a definite answer to such large and general questions. The experience of any individual minister, however wide and various, is too narrow to make him to characterise a whole population. Moreover, the disposition to generalise from a narrow experience is so strong by nature that it has to be resisted. But if I am expected to give my own personal impressions, that they may be taken for what they are worth, I should say—

1. The number of such "unbelievers" in the

community at large is very considerable; that is, of persons who are in a condition of intellectual unrest as to the truths of religion.

2. Their questioning does not concern topics which lie upon the very fringes of orthodoxy, but the cardinal, fundamental truths of Christianity, and to some extent of religion.

3. Such questioning, however, does not amount to denial, nor even to a scepticism which may be supposed to hold the balances even between faith and doubt; but the rest of faith is frequently disturbed by haunting questions, and moods of doubt alternate with moods of faith.

4. As regards our own particular church, the number of such inquirers is not large in proportion to our whole membership, nor as compared with some other churches. But the class affected is an important one, including often the most intelligent hearers; and the feelings of which I speak are seldom acknowledged to ministers, or even to friends, except in moments of special confidence.

5. What has been said applies in considerable measure to our younger ministry. And the fact that I name these — men whose sincerity and fidelity is beyond question — will help to indicate the kind of "unbelief" which I have chiefly in view in this address. I do not ask you to accept the above putting of the facts as correct, though perhaps some of you will confirm what has been said. If these things be even approximately true, it cannot be out of place for a ministers' meeting to consider the subject. Your own testimony given at the close of this address, whether confirming or contravening mine, will be most valuable.

III. The causes for such a state of things are not far to seek. A change in men's whole view of the universe has taken place during the last half century. Revolution would perhaps not be too strong a word to describe it. Mr. Balfour said a while ago, in an address on the characteristics of the nineteenth century, "We differ more from our grandfathers in our view of the universe than they did from the remotest philosopher or speculator upon things of which we have knowledge." And again, in the same address, he tells us that during this period there has taken place "the greatest revolution in secular and scientific thought of which any record remains to us." Mr. Balfour thinks that this change affects only the "setting" of religious truth, and very likely he is right. But it is not altogether easy, even for thinkers, to distinguish here between setting and jewel, between framework and picture, whilst no one can be surprised that any change in the "setting" of such important truths must imply serious disturbance of mind and unsettlement of faith.

Biblical criticism with its two sides, one affecting the form and the other the substance of revelation, has done its part in producing this unrest. Even where only "lower" or textual criticism is concerned, a considerable change has taken place in men's views of the Bible, both of the Old and New Testaments. But historical science, with its canons for determining historical truth, is producing changes of a much deeper kind, the issues of which will prove even more significant and far-reaching. It is not the Old Testament alone that is concerned, though the controversies of the last twenty years have circled chiefly round its documents. But within the last twelve months the

publication in English of Harnack's *What is Christianity?* the issue of the second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and the appearance of two such books as Moffatt's *Historical New Testament* and Gardner's *Exploratio Biblica* are quite sufficient to show the tendencies of critical theory in relation to those parts of the sacred Book which to Christians are most sacred of all.

Materialistic habits of thought are responsible for much spiritual unrest. The word "materialistic" is perhaps too strong, though "secular" is hardly strong enough to indicate what is meant. The facts are familiar to us all. Amongst the upper classes, occupied for the most part with social enjoyments and amusements; amongst the middle classes, devoted as they are to comfort and respectability; and amongst the artisan classes, eager to secure themselves from want and reach a higher standard of life in material things; amongst all classes—for various reasons, many of them not culpable but laudable—certain mental habitudes have been steadily increasing for fifty years, which tell decidedly against religion. These habits of mind lead to the laying stress on this life rather than a future state, this world rather than any other; and in this world on the body rather than the spirit, and on environment and conditions of life, its business and amusements, rather than on character, thought, and teaching. These tendencies are so strong that they determine the light in which everything is regarded; they produce an atmosphere, a medium, through which all objects are discerned; an unconscious bias, which terribly weighs down one side in the balance of man's complex nature.

In a sense there is nothing new in all this. These

characteristics are more or less present in every generation, but in our time they are greatly intensified. The incessant study of nature has tended to discourage a belief in revelation. The survey of the reign of law has tended to undermine the belief in miracle, as the tracing out of the story of evolution has made men disinclined to believe in Divine intervention. Historic science has raised serious questions concerning the accuracy of ancient records, even—or perhaps I should say especially—the most sacred; while the whole current of life carries men's thoughts away from the conception of a personal God who wills and acts, who reveals Himself to man, who controls and governs man, and who will at the last most certainly judge the whole race. That the influences of which these are illustrations operate for the most part indirectly and in the background of the mind, makes them not the less but the more potent.

It is not to be understood that these forces antagonistic to faith are necessarily evil in themselves. The facts of nature, of history, and of individual human life must be known and faced at all costs. Nor is it wholly to be regretted that faith must fight to live. Dr. Hort says in his Hulsean Lectures, "An easy belief, an easy disbelief, an easy acquiescence in the mood of suspense between belief and disbelief, are manifestations of a single temper of mind which ought to cause Christians more disquiet than the growing force of well-weighed hostility." Surely nothing can be more fatal in relation to the conflict between faith and unbelief than the ecclesiastical attitude too often exhibited—which first obstructs the progress of thought, then unintelligently follows it; which first denounces all

critics as infidels, and then makes hasty and ill-considered terms with them. The Church as such has always been prone at first to oppose new ideas too strenuously, then to admit modifications in traditional beliefs too freely, acting in both cases under the influence of fear. Timidity and rashness are nearer akin than might be imagined. Those whose duty it is to lead in religion ought surely to understand the real position from the outset, and with combined fearlessness and caution to combine old truth with new discoveries, thus being prepared to lead those who look to them for guidance, helping them step by step in God's appointed way. This brings us to speak of

IV. The preaching of to-day in relation to unbelief.

I shall not, I hope, be misunderstood, if I say at the outset that few questions on this subject arise in the mind of the man who, whenever he stands in the pulpit, *preaches indeed*. To a man possessed by a clear and vivid idea of what is really meant by the work of the Christian preacher, and who always realises that ideal, the question, What ought my preaching to be in relation to modern unbelief? would be largely superfluous. Most of us have a tolerably clear idea of what Christian preaching ought to be, but how few of us are able to attain, still less to maintain, even our own standard of duty in this matter.

The point is, that when a minister is able to realise the ideal of Christian preaching, when he speaks "as the oracles of God," a sacred messenger with a Divine commission, with truth immediately given him by the Holy Spirit, fitted for the needs of all, which it is his duty to announce in all the fulness of divinely

bestowed energy—under such conditions a preacher needs no rules or directions, but will do his work with an insight, persuasiveness, and power which are his by intuition. In other words, a genius needs no teaching. The ends which others seek to reach by patient toil and the study of rules, he can attain without effort. But for those of us who have not the Divine spark of genius—or that measure of grace which does more than the work of genius—it may be well to remember such considerations as the following.

Controversial preaching is nearly always a mistake. The pulpit is not the place for controversy. To use it in order to denounce opponents is to make of it a coward's castle, since no reply to the speaker's arguments is possible. And the day of rest and the hour of worship are too precious to be employed in mere argumentation, which is more likely to irritate than to convince.

Nor is "intellectual" preaching (so called) desirable. Sermons loaded with allusions, scientific or literary, calculated to display the knowledge of the preacher, offend none more than hearers who possess true knowledge of their own; and it is only the half-educated minister who is likely in this way to miss his high vocation. Shallow, rhetorical preaching is mischievous for different reasons. Men who seek for light and help upon the most sacred and difficult subjects cannot but resent the self-satisfied repetition of platitudes dressed up with showy "eloquence," which more than anything else has brought reproach on the pulpit.

On the other hand, in the preaching of a minister who knows that he has inquiring and doubting souls to deal with, there will always be a *background of com-*

prehesion and sympathy. He combines the sympathy which true comprehension gives with the comprehension to which true sympathy always leads. Imperfect sympathy means imperfect justice. No one can really help either a doubter or a sinner without a measure of sympathy and therefore of understanding in the case of each. This does not necessarily imply that a minister must have passed through similar experiences himself, though it will be none the worse for him if he has felt the force of at least some of the difficulties and temptations which he seeks to help others to overcome. But every minister, by virtue of his training in the school of life, may come to understand more or less fully how to deal with the disturbed and restless spirits who fain would believe but cannot, or who, having faith, are in constant danger of losing it.

Such sympathy and comprehension, however, remain only in the background of the preacher's mind and address. It is easy, without a single direct word on the subject, for a preacher who desires to help the doubter to show him that he understands where his difficulties lie and how at the time they are apt most acutely to press. To discuss difficulties openly and expressly is to suggest them; to understand them and sympathise with those called to struggle against them is essential to the true "priest" and to the true preacher of to-day. It is indeed a lesson learned from the one High Priest and Teacher of men, whose words to Thomas are full of significance for all Christian teachers: "Reach hither thy finger and see My hands, and reach hither thy hand and put it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." Perhaps the very tone in which Jesus spoke sufficed for Thomas; but his response to the Saviour's gracious words speaks

volumes for the power of sympathetic comprehension in the Teacher—"My Lord and my God!"

Such a preacher will place *in the foreground the positive exposition of great truths*. The emphasis lies here upon "positive" and "great." Man cannot feed upon negations, nor upon those lesser truths which form the staple of many sermons esteemed striking and original. The ingenious, the fanciful, the eccentric may have a place in the pulpit; but those who are unsettled in their faith as well as those who are anxious for their souls, will find little to help them in the "remarkable discourse" preached from an unusual text mainly in order to attract by novelty or to display the ingenuity of the preacher. Doubtless it is far harder to deal adequately with great themes, and we are continually told that doctrinal preaching is out of fashion; but I am inclined to think that nothing is more needed in the pulpits of to-day than the fresh, living, persuasive exposition of the great truths of the gospel, expounded in such a way as to meet the new needs of our time. The preachers of to-day as well as the apostles of old, may illustrate the meaning of the words, "by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

The note of *personal conviction* is all-important. This does not imply that a preacher should be egotistical, introduce fragments of autobiography, or in any other way obtrude himself. But one legitimate power of the pulpit lies in the tones of the living voice, though the speaker may have nothing to say so cogent as that which may be found in many a book. This unconscious "testifying," the tone of the man who can say, directly or indirectly, "I have tried this for myself, and have found it true and helpful and blessed," is

seldom out of place, and when entirely absent from preaching it is greatly missed. Of what Carlyle called "hearsays" the pulpit has usually been too full. A call to the ministry means amongst other things a call to declare what God has revealed to the minister himself as true, that to which he can bear personal testimony. And in days when so many can claim to be little more than "light half-believers of our casual creeds," it is no small matter if a preacher can give to his ministry the note which characterised St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." The persuaded persuade as truly as the mere dogmatist repels.

That there will be a *message to the intellect* in such preaching is certain. But I am anxious not to lay overmuch stress upon this point, and for reasons of time cannot now unfold what ought to be said upon it. I am inclined to think that in much of the apologetics of to-day—I may mention Dr. Bruce's volume on this subject as one illustration—a minimising tendency is too discernible. Unbelievers are not to be won by Christian teachers who appear anxious to find out how much of Christian doctrine may be discarded without actually destroying its essence, but rather by those who can commend to the highest reasoning powers of man the great central verities of faith, truths which reason did not discover and cannot fully comprehend, but which it can and must most truly apprehend when adequately expounded. As the late Aubrey Moore expressed it, "Man desires to be religious and rational. The life that is not both is neither."

But after all, the main appeal of the preacher is not to the intellect. Pure intellect may suffice for pure

mathematics and some other departments of human knowledge, though there are very few in which other faculties of our nature are not needed. In the acquisition of moral and spiritual truth the intellect has its part to play, usually an important, but sometimes a comparatively insignificant part, and it can never act alone.

The appeal of the preacher is to conscience, heart, and will, as well as to intellect; and these are so subtly and strangely blended in the life of the whole man that they cannot be separated by the keenest analysis. It is hard to believe—sometimes; and sometimes it is hard to disbelieve.

Just when we're safest, there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,
As old and new at once as Nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in our soul—

with what result remains to be seen. It is for the preacher to deal effectively with these deeper strata of human nature, the implicit assumptions of the human heart. He may argue once a year, he must proclaim every day. "That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled of the word of life," to that we bear witness, that we declare, that we announce unto you. Truth in its simplicity, beauty, and power, truth which will certainly influence the intellect if wisely delivered, but which will influence heart and conscience always—this forms the substance of our message. It is often not a question of reasoning. Newton closed his *Principia* with a testimony to the living God; La Place wrote, "We have no need of that hypothesis"; but the difference between La Place

and Newton was not one of the intellect. Pasteur said, "When I have studied thoroughly, I come back to the faith of the Breton peasant; if I studied still more, I should come to the faith of the Breton peasant woman." An epigrammatic phrase, not to be too literally understood. But many doubts that are bred of much thinking vanish in contact with actual life. Gladstone pointed out that men of action are usually less troubled by doubts than those who think and speculate, showing that the truths of faith work out well in practice, often when we cannot explain all their intellectual bearings.

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son ;
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one ;
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven ; wherefore be thou wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith !

It is for the preacher thus to sound the depths of the unbelieving heart and to prove that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

X

The Bible as a Teacher's Text-Book in the Twentieth Century¹

MR. CHAIRMAN, FRIENDS, AND FELLOW-WORKERS,—
It is a privilege to have the opportunity of addressing a meeting like this, a privilege which I owe to the fact that I have for the moment the undeserved honour of occupying the Chair of the Conference. Your President has many claims on his time and attention, few more worthy, especially just now, than that which is presented by the great Sunday School work of Wesleyan Methodism, which you who are gathered here so worthily represent.

As to any personal claims to speak on this occasion, I will only say that I have been nearly all my life engaged in some department or other of the work of education—chiefly religious education—and have always loved it. No one who does not love teaching should teach; perhaps only they who love it can teach. I may add here that I had the opportunity of taking part in the first Sunday School Convention, held some thirty years ago, soon after the formation of the Sunday School Union. You, Mr. Chairman, were then Secretary

¹ The substance of an address to the London Convention of Sunday School Teachers, held in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, E.C., 2nd October 1901.

of the Union, and the names of some who read papers—W. O. Simpson, G. W. Olver, W. Aver Duncan, and, last but not least, H. P. Hughes—are enough to indicate the interest which was taken in that notable gathering. Looking over the pages of the Report the other day, I was interested to see how many of the things said then about Sunday schools are well worth pondering even now.

But at this moment we have to deal with the differences between the work of those days and the work of to-day rather than similarities. What changes have taken place since 1870! May I mention, without dwelling on the details implied in them, the following suggestive headings:—

1. The spread of secular knowledge as illustrated in
 - (a) Primary education.
 - (b) The raising of the general level of knowledge.
 - (c) The modifications caused by the rapid advance of physical science.
2. The extensive increase among all classes of Bible knowledge.
3. The growing disposition to throw the burden of religious teaching upon the churches.
4. The attacks made from several quarters upon Christianity, and the silent opposition to religion, or indifference to it, now so common.
5. May I add, with a kind of double query, the idea that there is some weakening in the hold of Sunday schools on the churches and the country at large?

The idea just mentioned I do not accept in the form in which it is often stated. But something is happening as regards the Sunday schools and the

churches ; a change, silent, gradual, at present perhaps hardly perceptible, but none the less a change in the relation of Sunday schools to the general religious life of England, and perhaps some consciousness of this has been present in the minds of those who have summoned this Convention.

Has there been any diminution in the number of Sunday scholars ? In some churches there has. The Congregationalists have acknowledged this, and a report presented lately concerning the Diocese of Canterbury shows that in the Church of England such decrease is beginning to be serious. Amongst ourselves, however, this is not the case. Some returns printed in an appendix to a booklet on Sunday School Reform, by Messrs. Horrocks and Eldridge, give the following among other results. Reckoning from 1877 to 1899, there has been in—

Great Britain an increase of 26·8 per cent.

London	„	„	40	„
Bolton and Nottingham			50	„

Only in Cornwall has there been a decrease of 5 per cent., readily accounted for by the tide of emigration which has been steadily setting out from that country. But it is to be borne in mind that the greater part of the increase was in the former part of the period, and that the proportionate rate is not being maintained. We have, however, in our schools at this moment, roughly speaking, about half a million children between the ages of seven and fifteen, about a quarter of a million below seven, and another quarter of a million above fifteen years of age. The training of such a band of young people is indeed a noble and a responsible task.

Whatever may be the case as to our numbers, I fear it must be confessed that the work of Sunday schools has not advanced in proportion to other agencies employed. It has always been vigorous and flourishing; it is so at this moment. No one who asserts the contrary can be acquainted with the facts. But, especially in some parts of the country, it has not improved during the last thirty years in proportion to the general improvement of the country, and in these matters not to advance is to slip back. I may mention, perhaps, without invidiousness and without the slightest desire to find fault—

(a) The plant—buildings, furniture, and arrangements of the schools. Whilst in some places great improvement has been made, in many others, country schools especially, the provision made is most inadequate and would be condemned instantly by Government inspectors. We do not desire luxurious upholstery, nor even the comforts so often found in American schools, but at least the conditions of health should be observed, and teachers enabled to teach without being stifled or made ill.

(b) Methods have improved—somewhat. I will leave it to others present to say whether they think that these have improved at all in proportion to the advances made in secular education.

(c) The *personnel* of the teaching staff has, perhaps, improved a little. It is quite certain that no more patient, self-denying, devoted, and valuable body of church workers can be found than our Sunday-school superintendents, officers, and teachers taken as a whole. We ought devoutly to thank God for so noble a band of men and women. Still it is open to us to ask whether there is not room—I might have said

urgent need—for advance in the teaching power of our teachers, if the claims of the children of to-day are to be adequately met.

Following up the tenor of these general remarks, may I speak more specifically of the Bible as the teacher's text-book, and the way in which it should be used in our time in the Sunday school, if our work is to be effectively done?

That does not mean that I think the Sunday-school teacher should deal with nothing but the Bible. I could speak of the Catechism and the importance of catechising—the good that ministers might do in this direction. And I am inclined to think that in some elder or adult classes Christian evidences might with advantage be taught, where the right teacher can be secured. Further, I am not quite satisfied that in our schools so little is done to teach in a simple way the meaning of Methodism, and to enable the children to answer the questions, Why am I a Methodist, and why should I remain one? Anglicans take care to teach their children their own doctrine of the Church, and ours should not be left entirely without instruction and guidance in this matter.

But the Bible always has been and always will be the teacher's main text-book. It contains that which it is all-important the children should learn, whatever else comes or goes. And it may be desirable to notice briefly one or two questions which affect the authority of the Bible to-day as our one rule of faith and practice, and the use of it by intelligent teachers in the training of children. Has this sacred Book been so affected by modern criticism as that any modification in it in the way of teaching it is desirable or necessary?

I understand by biblical criticism the process of

inquiry into the Bible as a collection of literary compositions—the dates and authorship of the various books, the circumstances under which and the ends for which these books were primarily written, their place in history, their relation to one another, the measure of historical accuracy observed—and kindred questions. Such inquiry, I suppose we all agree, is—

1. Legitimate.

2. It is in any case to be reckoned with, as certain to be carried on, and likely to be increasingly important.

3. And I at least believe that if rightly carried on it can only be helpful, and may be made most helpful to all students of the Bible.

But in so wide a field all kinds of inquirers are engaged, and it will be necessary to distinguish between them; and, as I am accustomed to say to young ministers, so much more is it to be said to Sunday-school teachers, that many of these critics and their criticisms do not in the least concern you; they will not come in your way; and if they do, you may quite safely pass them by. When, however, views concerning the literary aspects of Scripture are brought to your notice, which claim attention because of the acknowledged learning and evangelical soundness of the writers, especially if these be found within the circle of your own trusted teachers and leaders, then surely the Sunday-school teacher should use what opportunities he has for studying these questions. I may say, however, that it by no means follows that he should introduce them to his scholars. The Sunday school is no place for discussion, or for doubtful questions. Only that which is substantially *accepted* by Evangelical churches should have a place there. But the wise

teacher will see to it that he knows at least as much as the most advanced among those whom he is likely to have to teach. No teacher can use the Bible intelligently as a text-book if he is less instructed in what is said and known about it than those who sit at his feet to learn.

Many of the questions raised by criticism do not touch doctrine at all. Many may safely be treated as open questions, and in any case matters of minor importance should be kept in the background. Mr. Moody once said, "What is the use of discussing the question whether there were two Isaiahs with people who hardly know there was one?" And now many critics would have us find three (or thirty) writers belonging to an Isaianic school who have contributed to the book known by the name of the "Son of Amoz." If it were so—not that I am persuaded of the truth of the theory—the supposition need not disturb us. Astronomers have taught us that the so-called belt of Saturn is not a rigid body as was supposed, but a moving constellation of many revolving moons. These all form an engirdling ring of light of wonderful beauty, and combine for one great purpose of delight and use. Whether God spoke by one prophet or by many is an interesting and important question, but the main point of importance is the fact that God did speak, and the significance of His message for us.

It is especially important that we should make the children *feel* what is meant by the inspiration of the Bible. Definitions of inspiration may vary, but every teacher can make children feel that this is *the* Book of books, and show them why it is to be regarded with utmost reverence and diligently obeyed as a rule of life. This is true, even if historical accuracy in detail

has not always been observed. As matter of fact, as regards this kind of accuracy the Scripture writers have often proved to be right and the critics wrong. But it is a mistake to build a doctrine of inspiration on the exact correspondence in detail of these writers with one another or with secular records. The main topic for the Sunday School is the presentation of the Bible as the Book of Life, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Centre and Living Lord of the whole, that children may in earliest life learn to reverence, love, and obey it, and to find it, what it is in very deed, the most interesting as well as the most valuable book in the world.

What, then, are the aims which the Sunday-school teacher sets before himself in his use of the Bible? To "bring the children to Christ," it is said. Certainly, if a phrase so sacred be not used as a mere phrase, but understood in all the fulness of its rich meaning. Are we to understand by it the attempt so to influence the will as that those who have not given their hearts to God and yielded to religion as the directing power in their life should do so? Undoubtedly, but not this only. Many children in Sunday-school classes are already Christians; and whether they are or not, all need teaching and training as actual or prospective disciples of Christ in a way that the current phrase above quoted hardly covers. But interpreted in its full sense, the bringing of young children to Christ that He should touch them is the great work of the Sunday School. And that means that whatever be the immediate lesson, and whatever part of the Bible be read and explained, all must be made to lead up to Christ Himself as the Lord of all Scripture, and the personal relation of the children to Him as their

Saviour and Lord made a prominent feature in every Sunday-school class.

May I say, then, to teachers, of whom I am one, as I do to myself, that in order to do better work in teaching others we must read more, think more, pray more, and *be* more.

1. Greater attention given to reading does not necessarily imply the multiplying of many books; although it is to be remembered that in these days books of great value may be purchased at a low price, and many books that cannot be bought may often be borrowed. I should like to urge the free and constant use of teachers' "Helps" and "Aids," now so abundant and accessible; of good Bible dictionaries; occasionally of books of "illustrations," and very, very occasionally a lesson may be taken direct from a book, as a school-boy uses a "crib" in his translation of the classics.

But the Bible itself is the book chiefly to be read, with the use of the Revised Version and the excellent marginal references now appended to it. Concordances and Digests will be of service, but what is wanted more than anything else is that thorough familiarity with the whole Book which used to be so common two generations ago, and is, alas! so rare to-day.

2. Reading without thinking is comparatively useless and may be mischievous. The eminent Frenchman, S. Beuve, said that a man can only teach "that which he *continues to know*." What I learnt some time ago is not necessarily mine; I must make it my own in practice as well as in theory, and keep it as mine by the continuous exercise of mind and will, or I cannot really teach it to others. Children are amongst the first to find out whether or no teachers are teaching that which they have carefully thought out for them-

selves and which they can make interesting by giving it the personal note, without which all teaching is apt to be dry and lifeless.

3. He is a "fool," in the Old Testament sense of the word, who has not learned the value of prayer in the acquisition and communication of knowledge—such knowledge, that is, as we are at present concerned with. There are many secrets which the Lord has hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. The whole history of Sunday schools is a commentary on the text that the most valuable work in every sense of the term is done, not by the teacher who possesses and ransacks a multitude of commentaries and does little else, but by one who faithfully uses all the appliances within reach and brings his lesson continually before God in prayer. "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

4. This brings us to the deepest and most fundamental lesson of all, that if we are to teach better, we must *be* more. It is true of many in our time that they are giving out in far greater ratio than they are taking in. Every one desires to be "a worker." It is a worthy and laudable ambition, but he who desires to influence others must himself possess, if he is effectively to impart. Emerson says somewhere, "I cannot hear what you say; what you are is shouting in my ears all the time." Children instinctively hear what we are often when they cannot understand what we say. And if the branches in the true Vine are to bring forth abundant fruit, it must be because they abide very fully and faithfully in Him from whom all their strength is drawn—He in them and they in Him—that so they may bring forth much fruit and the Father be abundantly glorified.

Let me remind you, in closing, that to you Sunday-school teachers are given high privileges which imply great responsibilities. You exert the highest influences upon minds young and plastic and susceptible; the themes with which you are occupied are the most important, the most interesting, and the most various possible; the ends for which you labour are assuredly the highest conceivable, whether the present welfare or the future destiny of the children be regarded. Labour, then, with renewed heart and hope and courage; you are aiding, perhaps more fully than any other body of workers in this country, the advancement of the kingdom of light, the kingdom of righteousness, truth, and peace in the midst of an evil world. Sometimes the morning for which we all long may seem to be coming swiftly; more often the chariots of the dawn seem to move all too tardily and heavily upon their slow-revolving wheels. But it is given to each of us in a small measure to hasten the coming of that great morning of the future, for each of us may bring, though it be only a few, little ones to Him who is the Light of the world; and whoso followeth Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

XI

Thomas Arnold—and After¹

FRRIENDS AND FELLOW-TEACHERS,—Amongst the duties of the presidential year, the delivery of this address is one of the most interesting, and perhaps one of the most difficult. It is interesting, because every Christian minister must greatly value the co-operation of Christian teachers, and be glad of the opportunity of addressing them; and it is difficult, not because it is hard to speak of education, but because it is hard to speak well and wisely on a topic so familiar, and freshly on one which has been so thoroughly handled by a series of able predecessors.

This is a valedictory address. That means that I have the pleasure of congratulating some of you on the accomplishment of the period of your training and your entry upon the duties of active service, and all of you on the conditions under which your important work is to be carried on. For never, perhaps, were there more fruitful opportunities, more abundant facilities, a fuller scope, an ampler harvest for the teacher—whether in primary or secondary schools, in the family or in the university, amongst boys or girls, young men or young women—than there are to-day.

¹ An address delivered to the students of the Westminster and Southlands Colleges, 5th July 1902. The address was considerably abbreviated in delivery.

I am, in the name of the committee, to bid all of you farewell at the end of term and the beginning of the vacation, and some of you farewell to the college life you will never see again. A golden period is that of college experiences. The ignorance and indecision of childhood are left behind, the limitations of manhood and womanhood are not yet reached; new powers are dawning, while new responsibilities have hardly begun to press upon you; new hopes and possibilities are looming in sight, without the burdens, the restrictions, and disappointments which go far to nullify many of them; it is the period of friendships and ideals and anticipations, when everything seems possible except that failure should come or the career that is just opening be anything but happy and successful. I congratulate you all on having known these halcyon days of college preparation, and would offer my best wishes for those who are closing them, that their highest hopes may be exceeded and the dreams of youth more than realised in the actual service upon which you are about to enter.

In choosing a subject for this address, I am at the same time unwilling to speak on any topic but education, and very desirous to avoid repeating in an imperfect way what has been better said by others before me. I propose, therefore, to fix attention for a while upon one central figure in the history and profession of education, gathering from one concrete example principles of perennial importance for teachers, and seeking to show their bearing on the problems of our own times. You may call the subject, if you will,

THOMAS ARNOLD—AND AFTER.

In so describing it, we shall have before us an

attractive and inspiring personality to study, instead of dry and abstract pedagogical maxims; while it is not my object to inquire into the state of education sixty years ago, but to bring out lessons which urgently need to be learned to-day. It is an additional gain that the portrait of one who has been called "the greatest school instructor of our age, perhaps the greatest that has ever discharged the office," has been painted in so masterly a manner that he lives before us even more clearly than before his own generation. Stanley's Arnold is an English classic, and a teacher's edition, recently published, with a preface by Sir Joshua Fitch, indicates that it is likely to be a standard volume for English teachers, as it has already been prescribed by the Board of Education as part of the curriculum in the preparation of candidates for the teachers' certificate. Another reason for this choice lies in the fact that Arnold's work in this country was epoch-making; so that while I would not be disrespectful enough to describe all teachers before him as antediluvian, the pleiosaurs and ichthyosaurs of education, yet none who have lived and taught here since his day can ignore the fact that his influence has constituted an era.

I do not forget that your work is carried on under very different conditions from his. Arnold was a clergyman, you are laymen or women whose work lies chiefly among girls and very young children; his work was that of higher education in a great public school, yours that of primary education with a limited control over your pupils; his name was eminent in a sense given to but one in a generation or a century. Yet no one understands better than you do that it is the principles of education that are the most important,

and that these can be best learned from an eminent example, and can be applied under most diverse conditions. And, though time will not allow my working out the theme, it would not be difficult to show how the principles which Arnold exemplified have operated since and filtered through every various strata of educational life—*e.g.* in the influence of his eminent pupils, Vaughan and Stanley, and his son Matthew; in the headmastership of Temple, Bradley, Benson, and others; in the subsequent development of educational leaders like Ed. Thring, R. H. Quick, and J. G. Fitch, as well as in the training of hundreds of others, unknown to fame, whose life-work has been largely based on the example and quickened by the inspiration of Arnold of Rugby.

If a personal word may be forgiven, I have, perhaps, some claim to speak. I have been engaged in education almost from the time of leaving school. I read Arnold's Life for the first time some forty years ago, re-read it once a year for more years than I care to count, and in reading it again for the purposes of this address found it still marvellously fruitful in unexpected ways. I am not here as a hero-worshipper, and am not about to put a statue on a pedestal for your admiration. Arnold had faults, as he himself knew very well; though for some of them we may almost love him better and hardly admire him less. But any who would influence young life deeply, helpfully, permanently, any who desire to understand what is meant by that true manliness which is true godliness, and so to exhibit it as to win and sway the best life of the coming generation, may do worse, and in some respects can hardly do better, than study Arnold's life and follow him, as he followed Christ.

When Arnold was a candidate for the headmastership of Rugby, in 1827, a letter was read from Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel, in which he prophesied that "if Mr. Arnold were elected, he would change the face of education all through the public schools of England." Moberly, headmaster of Winchester, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, writing twenty years later, said, "A most singular and striking change has come upon our public schools—a change too great for any person adequately to appreciate who has not known them in both these times. I am sure that to Dr. Arnold's personal earnest simplicity of purpose, strength of character, power of influence, and piety, the carrying of this improvement in our schools is mainly attributable." That was a bold prophecy to make concerning any man of thirty years of age, and almost an unparalleled circumstance that it should be fulfilled by a man who died before he was fifty. To what was this remarkable phenomenon due, and what may we learn from such a type?

1. It is obvious, in the first instance, that an enthusiasm for teaching as a noble profession was amongst the distinguishing features of his work. The traditional idea of the schoolmaster was that of a harmless drudge or an energetic flogging machine. A man who had failed in attempts to enter one of "the learned professions," who had not influence enough to be admitted into the public service, nor energy enough for business, fell back on teaching. A dominie in Scotland has often been a "stickit minister"; and if a Keate or a Busby achieved a reputation, it was through his vigour in the use of the birch and the ingenuity of the excuses he found for resorting to it. That a man should love teaching, find a personal pleasure in initiating dullards into the rudiments of knowledge, was then

inconceivable; whilst certain axioms of our time—that it is no easy thing to teach; that the possession of knowledge by no means implies the power to impart it; that high qualities are necessary to do any part of the work well; that some of the highest qualities are necessary for doing the lowest part as it ought to be done; that grinding and grounding are in their way more important than perfecting and polishing—were then either unknown, disbelieved, or ignored.

Arnold, at least, greatly helped to change all that. The qualities which afterwards distinguished him appeared in the germ at Laleham, when he was preparing a few pupils for the University. "His hold over his pupils perfectly astonished me," says Professor B. Price. "It was not so much an enthusiastic admiration for his genius or learning or eloquence which stirred within them; it was a *sympathetic thrill*, caught from a spirit that was earnestly at work in the world." The source of his earnestness will appear shortly; meanwhile I may venture to say to you teachers that none of the best influence can be exercised without that "sympathetic thrill," and no secret can be discovered for imparting it unless a man loves and believes in his work. Horace said long ago of the dramatic poet, "If you want me to weep, you must first weep yourself;" only the persuaded persuade, and only the enthusiastic can quicken and kindle others. Arnold would engage no assistant masters who considered teaching a kind of by-work or stop-gap. "You must enter heartily upon it as a life's business," he would say.

How can knowledge be imparted in the best sense unless the teacher is penetrated through and through not only with the love of knowledge, but the belief that others can share it, and the conviction that to help

them to share it is one of the high privileges and prerogatives of a God-given nature? He who enters the teaching profession merely to make money has the soul of a huckster; he who enters upon it as a stepping-stone to something else deserves that the stone should slip and let him into the stream; and he who undertakes this work because he has no other resort cannot expect to reap other than a harvest of disappointment and failure in a task which was undertaken only as the last refuge of a helpless and hopeless man. The teacher who is to succeed in the best sense of the word must be a man like Arnold, who sees in young souls full of infinite budding capabilities and his own power of enlightening, helping, and guiding them, a Divine opportunity of inexhaustible value such as none but heaven-sent teachers possess.

2. With Arnold all education was of necessity Christian. He simply could not understand and would not hear of any other. The work of teaching was to him religious; his whole conception was religious, and for him religion meant Christianity. For him the word Christ meant everything; he cared nothing for denominational additions to the creed for which it stood, and he would tolerate no subtractions from it. Alone he protested against the admission of Jews into Parliament, because he held that the Legislature should be, at least nominally, Christian, and for him Christianity was "the sovereign science of life in all its branches." "Moral studies not based on Christianity," he said, in relation to the newly founded University of London, "must be unchristian, and therefore such as I can take no part in." "I have one great principle," he wrote to one of the trustees of Rugby, "which I never lose sight of: to insist strongly on the difference

between Christian and non-Christian, and to sink into nothing the differences between Christian and Christian." Again, "It seems to me that all, absolutely all, of our religious affection and veneration should go to Christ Himself, and that Protestant and Catholic, and every other name which expresses Christianity and some other differentia or propria besides, is so far evil, that when made an object of attachment it leads to superstition and error."

This is strong language, and would need some explanation to make it perfectly applicable in our day. But the principle is sound, and it would be well if, in the altered circumstances of later days, it were taken by Christians of all types as a guide. Hence arose Arnold's strenuous, almost fierce opposition to the Tractarian movement. If he had lived to this day, he would see how true his premonitions on this subject were. Scripture is our only standard of appeal, he was never tired of asserting; "whereas I am satisfied that church authority, whether early or late, is as rotten a staff as ever was Pharaoh king of Egypt's—it will go into a man's hand to pierce him."

It is not Arnold's theology that I am concerned with, but the character of his teaching. And no one can understand his work as a teacher who does not grasp his fundamental principle. "Neutrality with regard to Christianity is virtual hostility." For "to enter into the deeper matters of conduct and principle, to talk of our main hopes and fears, and yet not to speak of Christ, is absolutely, to my mind, to circulate poison." "The idea of a Christian school," says Stanley, his biographer, "was to him the natural result, so to speak, of the very idea of a school in itself." And when a disturbance took place which compelled him to dismiss

many boys, and much excitement prevailed, "It is not necessary," said the headmaster, "that this should be a school of three hundred, or one hundred, or fifty boys; but it is necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen." It was his own habit in teaching the Sixth Form, and he recommended the practice to his boys, to "note in any common work they read such judgments of men and things, and such a tone in speaking of them, as are manifestly at variance with the spirit of Christ." His boys noted the black cloud of indignation which passed over his face when speaking of the crimes of Napoleon or Caesar, and the dead pause which followed; or the way in which, after reading in Scripture a description of the Gentile world—"Now," he said, as he opened the satires of Horace, "we shall see what it was."

All this may seem as if too high a note were being struck for ordinary teaching, but these sentences must not be misunderstood. It is not meant that the subject of religion was being continually dragged in, or that perpetual reference was made to the sacred Name, still less to sacred doctrine. What Arnold was anxious about was not Christian doctrine so much as a Christian tone upon ordinary subjects. He expressly disclaimed again and again all attempt to inculcate religious theories and creeds and catechisms, but the bearing of doctrine on religious feeling and character was what he chiefly found in the Scriptures, and this was with him a fundamental and absolutely essential element of sound education.

I am, happily, not concerned to-day with any controversial topics, such as the extent to which the Bible may be taught in primary schools to children of different Christian denominations. But we may well

ask whether in this, as in many other matters, Arnold was not before his time, and whether what is wanted now above all else, in primary or in secondary schools, in families and universities, wanted in teachers and in the taught, is not precisely this emphasis upon Christ and Christianity, which is interfered with on the one hand by sectarianism and on the other by secularism. It is not denominational formularies that young people want, however useful these may be in their place as safeguards of truth and protests against error, but that essentially Christian tone which can only be imparted by a Christian teacher, and which should be not so much imparted directly in religious lessons as made to tell indirectly on all subjects and at all times. The Rugby boys, especially the best of them, said that when they left school they felt they had been in an atmosphere unlike that of the world about them. And who shall say that it is impossible to create such an atmosphere in a board school, or a private school, or a public school, without offending the susceptibilities of the most sensitive, simply by the force of a strong, simple, earnest, all-dominating Christian character? Such, for instance, as the spirit of this prayer with which Arnold closed a private letter in 1833: "May God grant to my sons, if they live to manhood, an unshaken love of truth, and a firm resolution to follow it for themselves, with an intense abhorrence of all party ties, save that one tie which binds them to the party of Christ against wickedness!"

3. A marked feature in Arnold's work, which I shall only be able to touch in passing, is the stress he laid on character and the comparatively low place he gives to mere intellect. In a short address at the end of one term, he said to the boys, "What I have often

said before I repeat now: What we must look for here is, first, religious and moral principle; secondly, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability." Or, again, "Mere intellectual acuteness, divested as it is in too many cases of all that is comprehensive and great and good, is to me more revolting than the most helpless imbecility, seeming to be almost like the spirit of Mephistopheles."

That this implied no weakness or laxity on the intellectual side hardly needs stating. No one knew better than Arnold the signs of mental ability and diligence in study; no one insisted more strenuously on each boy doing his best. But it is a question of comparative emphasis, and the solution is found in a characteristic sentence: "the fruit which I above all things long for is moral thoughtfulness, the inquiring love of truth going along with the devoted love of goodness"—a definition, I may say in passing, which every Christian teacher may well have engraven on his heart of hearts as the fruit of his labours above all else to be desired. Arnold would never consent to give up as his ideal the lofty Old Testament quality known as wisdom, which is at least as much moral as intellectual; and it was this which made him the father of nineteenth-century Broad Churchmen and muscular Christians, and a good many more developments for which he was not responsible. He sought ever to promote a union between "everything that is sensible, manly, and free, everything that is pure and self-denying and humble and heavenly." "I have still found," he says, "that folly and thoughtlessness have gone to evil; that thought and manliness have been united with faith and goodness." A generation of truly Christian teachers in all the various grades of schools in our

land, who taught this doctrine and held up this noble ideal, in their own practice and spirit as well as in their teaching, would work a revolution indeed. And whether some such revolution is not necessary if in this twentieth century England is to retain the national position she holds, and be worthy of the privileges with which Providence has endowed her, is a question which concerns us all, which concerns Christian ministers of all churches, but concerns none more than the noble band of teachers who are represented by the Westminster and Southlands students of to-day.

4. A teacher who reads Arnold's Life in the hope of gaining some specially effective educational methods will probably be disappointed, but he will gain something better—the inspiration of a great example. Every good teacher fashions his own methods, and to imitate another in details is often the surest way of missing the real significance of a great exemplar. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Still, it is quite possible to enter more into detail, and give a few hints of the more specific lessons which the life of this teacher of teachers conveys; *e.g.*—

(1) Foremost I place a quality named in New Testament *ἐλικρίνεια*, a kind of moral transparency, a straightforwardness and godly sincerity which is not so common as it should be amongst good people, but which brings all into immediate and healthy contact with the spirit of a man who possesses it. Stanley remarks in Arnold, "The power in which so many teachers are deficient, of saying what he did mean, and of not saying what he did not mean—the power of doing what was right, and speaking what was true, and doing what was good, independently of any professional

or conventional notions that so to act, speak, or think was becoming or expedient." I have put this first, but is it not everything? To be a true man—how little, how much! It is nothing, it is all. If a man at heart is conscientious, trying to do the right because it is right, then the only other thing he needs in order to exert the best influence is to be real, and let the influence of his real goodness flow forth, unimpeded by those barriers of professionalism and conventionalism which may be useful in their place for some purposes, but which, in a large proportion of instances, are only too effectual hinderers of good.

(2) This gave Arnold the earnestness which was so contagious. An "indescribable zest" characterised him and communicated itself to all his pupils. He made things "so interesting—so exciting," it was said. One after another discovered that his whole view of life had been changed; "a strange joy came over him" on discovering that he had the power of doing his work well, and "a deep respect and ardent attachment sprung up towards one who had taught him thus to value life and his own self, and his work and mission in the world." He concentrated interest upon the school, which he called "our great self," and so threw himself into it that the existence of the school became almost merged in him. So the great spiritual law of losing one's life to find it may be illustrated on the larger or smaller scale. Because Arnold was content to lose himself in Rugby, Rugby came to most people to mean Arnold. How true this may be in a country village, as well as in a great national institution, has been often proved. Teachers, give that you may gain; die, that you may live; lose your smaller selves in your work, to find a greater self that shall never perish.

(3) Another notable feature was the personal self-respect which he inspired into his several pupils by the individual interest he displayed in each. There was no mere massing together; he understood that a good shepherd knows his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. Of course this was illustrated chiefly in the Sixth Form and those under his special care. It is impossible, perhaps undesirable, for the headmaster of a great public school containing several hundred boys to concern himself minutely with the individual care of younger boys. But in all who were committed to his personal care he took the most living individual interest.

Especially he did not care only for clever boys; a great danger with some teachers, a greater danger now than in Arnold's time, because clever boys "pay" so much better for attention. He tells how ashamed he was at Laleham, when he had lost patience with a boy and spoken sharply to him, and the boy said, "Why do you speak angrily, sir? I am really doing the best I can." He went so far in later life as to say he had a reverence for such. "If there be one thing on earth which is truly admirable, it is to see God's wisdom blessing an inferiority of natural powers, where they have been honestly, truly, and zealously cultivated." In speaking of a pupil of this sort he once said, "I would stand to that man, *hat in hand*;" and it was his real and deep respect for worth of this kind that drew from him, on one occasion, the only personal praise ever bestowed on any boy in one of his sermons.

(4) There was often a sternness in his manner of which he was unconscious. He was always tender towards little boys, and he used to treat the Sixth Form almost as equals; but the majority of the boys often

dreaded him. His frown was feared, and it was often seen in strong resentment against certain forms of evil then (and now) only too often found in public schools. But no one ever doubted his sympathy who had occasion to seek it. "If I could receive a new boy from his father without emotion," he said, "I should know it was time to be off." Sometimes he could hardly speak from the depth of his feelings for a small boy just entering on the big world at school. And the boys instinctively knew that he felt with them. "He calls us *fellows*," they said in wonder; and such familiarity was much less common seventy years ago than it is now. The tenderness and playfulness of his domestic relations were well known; and with him, as with many noble characters, tenderness and severity were only two aspects of the same quality of intense feeling.

(5) Arnold rightly insisted that teachers must always be learners. As S. Beuve has said, we can teach only that which we continue to know. How many give forth lifeless teaching, because their knowledge, acquired in the past, is no longer in living relation with their own minds? Or, worse still, their own minds may have ceased to live; and they have ceased to live if they have ceased to grow. Arnold would have no assistant-masters about him who did not satisfy him in this respect. If the mind is stagnant, he said, it gives no wholesome draughts; it is a pond instead of a spring. "That which you know and love, you cannot but communicate. That which you know and do not love you soon cease to know." Education must be "dynamical not mechanical." Only if the mind of a teacher be itself an energy, able to grasp and continually doing so, can he cultivate the mind of another." I know that

this is a principle which you will more need to remember in twenty years' time than now. But all preachers and teachers need to remember it, and it applies to students and those who are beginning to teach in many ways that I will not stay now to trace out.

(6) It might be supposed from this description of Arnold that he was a great idealist and optimist, filled with a high enthusiasm which took but little account of the facts of life, the real state of boy-nature, the actual conditions of school existence, the drudgery inseparable from the steady prosecution of the work of teaching and training boys of all kinds, assembled in large numbers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The high aims which characterise the great-souled man are quite compatible with a thorough knowledge of the low and depressing conditions under which they are to be pursued. Some of the most remarkable descriptions I know anywhere of the evils of public schools and the difficulties of schoolmasters are to be found in Arnold's Life. Indeed, to read some of his letters you might well suppose him unduly pessimistic. I will select only illustrations which apply to boy-nature and the work of the teacher generally. "What I want to see in the school, and cannot find, is an abhorrence of evil. I always think of the psalm, 'Neither doth he abhor anything that is evil.'" He speaks of the curse of evil companionship, excessive deference to the public opinion of the school, and its low standard; and at the sight of a knot of vicious or careless boys gathered round the great schoolhouse fire, he would say, "It makes me think that I see the devil in the midst of them." He speaks of the "nakedness of boy-nature," which men in the "full dress of decencies and civilisations" hardly realise. I can

understand, he says, how there could not be found ten righteous men in a whole city; and after years of fighting against the evils of a great public school, find it very hard not to throw all up in despair.

Again, it is terrible "to see so much of sin combined with so little of sorrow. In a parish, there is sin, but there is also suffering. Providence chastises, and the way is opened for improvement: but these boys have plenty, health and youth, and these are really awful to behold when unblessed."

Passages such as these might easily be multiplied. But taken by themselves they would be misleading, as would the descriptions of Arnold's buoyancy and cheerful, high-toned enthusiasm, when taken alone. Their real significance—and, I may add, their real lesson for teachers—lies in the combination of the two. It is the man who sees the evils so clearly, and who feels them keenly and deeply, who is the tireless and undaunted leader of the campaign against them. A mere enthusiast would not measure the extent of the need, and would travel forward with a light heart, leaving the real dragons unfaced, unfought, and unconquered. The man who has thoroughness and earnestness of character enough to face these ugly monsters is only too apt, as Arnold was in passing moods, to give up the conflict with them as hopeless. The true leader of men is he who combines realism, as it is called—a thorough knowledge of the evils at their worst—with the idealism which knows the secret of victory, and in faith and noble imagination sees that victory already won. Teachers who have hard, dull, discouraging, apparently hopeless work to do with unpromising material, take courage! You are but part of an army of light, clad in the armour of righteousness on the

right hand and the left, which will win in the long-run. Keep your doubts and fears, as Arnold did, to yourself, occasionally bring to bear on them the counsel and sympathy of intimate friends, above all cast this burden on the Lord. But as teachers and leaders, be brave.

If in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm !

Some very able men who have undertaken educational work have really never understood the conditions of the problem before them—*e.g.* Wesley never understood boys, and his regulations for Kingswood would—but for respect for his character and motives—be pronounced ridiculous. It was often said that Arnold did not understand boys; that by trying to make them prematurely and unnaturally good he turned them into prigs. But those who read him carefully will see that he recognised the danger—the “increased responsibility of a Christian education”—and few things could be better for the primary or the secondary schools of this country than a return to the principles of Arnold and a thorough confronting of school life, with all its recognised difficulties and characteristic evils by a strong, sustained, comprehensive, and thorough system of Christian education.

5. There remains one thing more to be said, as briefly as may be. It would be utterly misrepresenting Arnold to portray him as a mere schoolmaster. He used to say, “I live for the school,” and it was true; but it was true only because he lived for something

beyond. Kipling asks, "What does he know of England, who only England knows?" So will that man fail to do justice to the little world of school whose vision is bounded by the four walls of the schoolhouse or the playground. It must be remembered that Arnold died at forty-six, and was just reaching the period of life when a successful headmaster of a public school is promoted in the world—though he had been too independent of parties to receive a partisan's reward.

But the point I wish to make is, that he was both fit for a higher post and also more fit to remain on in his position at Rugby, because all through his life he had his eye on other and larger issues. One of the great dangers of the life of a schoolmaster—represented in the common caricatures of the pedagogue—is that of narrowing down his nature in his own limited sphere, and becoming autocratic, dogmatic, and intolerable. A man who would retain the freshness, purity, and wisdom of heart which is needful for one who undertakes to guide young life, should see to it that he preserves a living interest in the world outside, has his own "hobbies" or amusements, to keep his own spirit young and free, and, especially as he nears middle life, must beware of routine. It does not fall within my scope to point out what Arnold's were—the leaping-pole and "gallows" of his earlier years, his Roman history and Thucydides in middle life, his interest in *πολιτική*—i.e. not "politics," but the principles of the gospel in their application to the welfare of the State and its citizens—all the way through. One would have to speak also of the wonderful beauty and joy of his domestic life, which helped to make and keep him young; of his love of Nature and constant flights from Warwickshire

to his beloved Fox How and the lakes and mountains of Westmoreland. I should like especially to have lingered over what he called the two "softeners and sweeteners" of scholastic life—prayer and intercourse with the poor. For, assuredly, there is a hardness which unconsciously gathers like a scaly crust over the nature of either man or woman whose main business it is to lay down the law, to make rules and see that they are kept, and whose chief occupation is the cultivation of the intellectual powers. Prayer makes us humble, reminds us that we also have a Master in heaven, that there is no respect of persons with Him. And intercourse with the poor softens the "dourness" of the self-reliant nature, enlarges and deepens the sympathies, and leads to those words of kindness and acts of mercy which bring us nearer to God and are more effective in making men like Him than all the studies in the world, and all powers of acquiring knowledge for ourselves or imparting it to others.

But all this would lead us too far afield. It is not deserting the subject, however, to say that this man, who was so tremendously in earnest about one thing, and did it so well, did it not the worse but the better because he had eyes and heart in passing for other things. "Jack of all trades and master of none" is not the definition of a successful man. To know "everything of something and something of everything" is a better aim to set before one. But one of Arnold's most frequently quoted watchwords was from his favourite Herodotus, which may be rendered, "It is the bitterest of griefs to know much but accomplish nothing." There is no room in the world for the pedant and the bookworm. The successful teacher is a man whose heart is fully in his work, and who gives the

chief part of his mind to it, but who keeps mind and heart always open to the sunshine of life, and lets the fresh air blow in continually through all the crannies of his nature; who is as pleasant a companion on a walk across country as he is a clear and interesting interpreter of books and figures. The French have a proverb, "He was born a man and died—a grocer." You may think a teacher better than a grocer—I do not say—but do not let your epitaph be, "He was born a man and died a—schoolmaster," for such a one will not make even a good schoolmaster. The man with the widest outlook will best be what Thomas Arnold was—a great helper. He was a kind of Great-heart in pilgrim life, and one could hardly wish for a higher vocation. I am almost afraid to quote lines so well known as M. Arnold's in "Rugby Chapel"—reprinted, I am glad to see, in the teacher's edition of the Life. But I know not where else the spirit of that noble life is so truly and admirably portrayed. The radiant vigour, the buoyant cheerfulness, the restful protection of his strong and genial nature, spreading like the broad boughs of a mighty oak, casting the cool shadow of a great rock in a weary land—all this and more you may find in the familiar poem. The son pictures the father as still "somewhere, surely, afar," carrying on the work he did so well through too short an earthly life.

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not, of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly represses the bad!

Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the borderland dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest! this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself,
And at the end of the day,
O faithful shepherd, to come
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

If some of us who, all unworthy, have shepherding to do, were but faithful in our day and generation, as was Thomas Arnold in his, how soon would God's wayward flock be gathered home!

6. I do not forget that our subject is Arnold—*and after*. It is close upon a hundred years since he was born, more than fifty since he died. What changes have been effected in that half-century, in the world of education as well as outside it! I will touch very lightly on some of these, that we may measure the distance between Arnold's world and ours, and be the better able to apply his principles under new conditions.

Since 1850 the whole university system has been altered; Oxford and Cambridge have opened their doors to other students besides those who could subscribe the Articles of the Church of England, and the whole curriculum of these ancient universities has passed from the mediæval to the modern stage. The University of London is rapidly changing from being a mere Examining Board into an institution worthy of its name. In all these highest seats of learning, women—after an arduous struggle, not quite ended yet—have claimed and are holding an honourable place

of their own. The public schools of this country have been reformed, or, rather, revolutionised. The whole national system of primary education is but some thirty years old, and is at this moment in process of being reconstructed. Secondary, or middle-class education, has advanced with rapid strides, and will shortly be still further improved, with government aid and under national direction and control. Technical education is a strong, young plant, the growth and development of which in a short time have been marvellous, and it would be hard to prophesy what work it will accomplish in the course of the next generation. And in addition to all this, what may be called an educational ladder has been set up, by means of which a boy of ability may pass with ease from step to step, and the poorest and most ignorant, if able to learn and profit by the best teaching, may find the door of progress continually open before him. Some rounds of this ladder are still wanting, and others are still too far apart; but the ladder is there, and it is happily a part of the national ideal of education that it should be strengthened and completed.

But these changes, immense as they are, do not represent the still more vital and fundamental changes which have come over the spirit and character of education in this country. Science rules supreme; and in using the word, I have to add that for the most part it implies the standards and methods of physical science, of which Arnold said that rather than have it made the chief thing in the education of his children, he would prefer that they should believe that the sun moved round the earth. A paradoxical utterance, unintelligible to this generation, but conveying a deep truth to those who know how to receive it. Utilitarianism

is dominant as it was not fifty years ago; and this change, like many others, must be taken for better, for worse. That teaching should keep in view the practical conditions of life and fit children for active usefulness and worldly success is one thing; that higher considerations should be ruthlessly set aside for a system of "payment by results," of organised cramming for examinations and working for success in gaining scholarships, fellowships, and positions of emolument, and that the one question asked concerning a "liberal" education should be whether it will enable a youth to jostle competitors out of his way amidst the crowds that block the path to worldly advancement—that is quite another matter. Doubtless, good and evil are blended in modern methods, but for better, for worse, utilitarian ideas prevail far more than they did sixty years ago.

It is from this point of view that the most recent interest in educational progress has taken its rise. England has been told that she must "wake up." We have made the discovery afresh that Englishmen do not care for learning as such; that they undervalue knowledge, and while they believe in athletic training, they systematically undervalue mental gymnastic; so that, whether in the conflicts of the battlefield or the market, in commerce or in war, we are in danger of being beaten—not for want of power or ability, but for want of well-disciplined intellectual powers. We are told that we have plenty of brawn and brass, but are deficient in brains. So our people are becoming uneasy and anxious to bestir themselves. For this and other reasons, opportunities in education are more abundant than ever, careers are more open to talent, and the conflict becomes more keen as natural selection is

allowed to operate more freely; the weak increasingly go to the wall, and only the fittest—for some purposes—survive.

Again, it is better understood than it used to be that a teacher must be taught, and the whole science of pedagogics—with its studies of child-life, its elaborate manuals, and its systematic arrangements for making admirable machines first of the teachers and then of the taught—has sprung full-grown into existence. All the methods have improved, so that the pupil teacher of to-day understands some things in the art and science of teaching of which the university graduate in the grammar school of Arnold's time was sublimely ignorant.

But what is even more important than the improvement of methods is the increased sympathy with child-life characteristic of our time, and the increased insight and understanding which sympathy always brings with it. Our fathers—or, at least, our grandfathers—had little comprehension of this. Few troubled, sixty years ago, to understand exactly what was going on in a child's mind, and how that wonderfully delicate and impressible organism, a child's brain, was to be dealt with, so that its exquisitely susceptible fibres might be developed, stimulated, and strengthened without being over-excited or over-strained. It is quite possible for the pendulum to swing too far the other way, and for children to be enfeebled by indulgence and excessive sensitiveness to their feelings and desires. A measure of hardness is necessary in an education that is to prepare for life. But no one can deny that the importance of sympathy in education and the advance made in this direction during half a century is immense.

7. I have touched very lightly only a few of the

changes which have so changed the face of education that we seem to live in a different world from Arnold's. And yet, after all, the work is the same, the problems are the same, and the conditions under which our work is carried on are fundamentally identical, in spite of the enormous changes on the surface of things. Human nature does not change so much as modern philosophers would persuade us. You may still study with advantage what Herodotus tells about the method of training the young princes of Persia 400 years B.C. How at seven the boy was taught to ride and face wild beasts; at fourteen he was placed under four child-guiders—the wisest man that could be found, the most just, the most temperate, and the most brave. From these respectively he learned four things—the fear and service of the gods; to speak the truth all his life through; not to be conquered by a single form of pleasurable indulgence; and “to be fearless in all things, knowing that whenever he fears, he is not a prince, but a slave.” One is tempted to ask, Will the Education Bill of the present Government, and the board of managers under the Committee of the County or Urban Council, which it is so very important not to appoint *ad hoc*—secure all this and something more?

Boy-nature—and perhaps girl-nature—maintain the features, not a few, which have marked sons of Adam and daughters of Eve from the time of Herodotus. Aristotle, whom Arnold was so fond of praising, was wiser than perhaps any mortal man ought to be; yet I doubt whether he, any more than Wesley, quite understood that strange creature, the young male animal. The old riddle makes boys to be like telescopes, easily drawn out, easily seen through, easily shut up. Is that true of your boys—or girls? “Girls are harder to

understand than boys, even for a woman"—and who can properly fill a vessel, the shape and quality and capacity of which he has yet to learn?

So the teachers of to-day, whilst rejoicing over many improvements in rooms and appliances, in the number of cubic feet of air allotted to them, the greater suitability of text-books, the increased reasonableness of inspectors, and other sundry gains and marks of progress, will find it their wisdom still to study what I may call the best of the old masters. More is to be learned from a wise man under the most old-fashioned system than from a—well, one who is not a wise man, under the most approved methods of the twentieth century. You need to know the materials upon which you have to work, the nature of young life. For this you must be able to be young and keep young yourselves. For this, again, you need to be able to preserve your enthusiasms, and I give you an admirable recipe of a wise man of old time—keep always alive in your hearts the love of knowledge, the love of work, and the love of God.

So the ends of education are substantially the same; that is, of the highest and best. You remember Ruskin's Savoyard guide, whom the eloquent critic of educational methods adduces to prove that "getting no education is by no means the worst thing that can happen to us." This man could hardly read, and could not write; he knew no language but his own, no science or art, except some practical knowledge how to till his fields. Yet Ruskin says he was one of the happiest persons he ever knew, as well as one of the best, and one of the pleasantest and most intelligent companions he ever had. He had a philosophy of his own, too; and when our philosopher "provoked and fatigued him with less cheerful views of the world than his own,

he would fall back to my servant behind me, and console himself with a shrug of the shoulders and a whispered, *Pauvre enfant ! il ne sait pas vivre !* (Poor child, he doesn't know how to live!).” How few people, educated or uneducated, have learned this crowning lesson. Yet surely it should not be ignored in the curriculum, if it can be taught and we can find teachers to teach it.

Huxley stands at the antipodes from Ruskin as a thinker; yet his admirable definitions of the aims of the true teacher and the meaning of a liberal education would commend themselves to the moralist and the mystic as much as to the man of science. You know them, and I will not repeat them in your hearing, except to emphasise his phrase concerning the body as always the servant, not the master of the spirit, and “the passions trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience.” Who or what is to be the master of that tender conscience is another question, in the decision of which we may or may not think the man of science not the best guide.

And our methods—changing as they are, still at heart and at root the best methods of the best teachers remain the same! “I found the children *human*,” Matthew Arnold was fond of saying; and he thought this the highest praise that could be given to the work of any school. Rightly understood, it is high praise, though not the very highest, to say that the teacher has learned how to avoid those hard, lifeless, mechanical modes of teaching which are dull in themselves and turn out dull children, who, whatever examinations they can or cannot pass, are anything but “human.”

You remember that distinguished man of letters

who, on visiting a school, found the children busy with arithmetic, able to do "sums" with considerable rapidity, but generally unintelligent. He asked them if they knew what was to be found inscribed on a penny, and what it meant. None seemed to know, and he produced a sovereign, promising to give it to the child who could best explain the arms of England to be found upon it. But no answer was forthcoming. "How many boys are there in this class?" he said. After some difficulty the number was discovered to be thirty-five. "If I divide the sovereign between you, how much will each get?" This division sum in mental arithmetic proving too difficult, the master suggested that thirty might be tried instead of thirty-five. "Now," said the visitor, "five of you must stand out for the other thirty to divide the sovereign. Which of you are willing to stand out?" . . . I wonder what branch of what curriculum in any school undertakes the teaching of that lesson? Yet is it not a lesson worth the learning, worth the teaching? Surely it is as well worth mastering by teachers or taught as some of those over which infinite pains are spent in these days of increasing knowledge and enfeebled character.

The moral of the above story would, however, I fear, lead to heresies so serious that if I were to press it I should for ever lose my character for educational orthodoxy. None the less it remains true that as man does not live by bread alone, so assuredly he does not live by knowledge alone. Teachers may be slow to believe with Wordsworth that "we live by admiration, hope, and love," yet if a child leaves school without having ceased to wonder, and always wondering at and admiring the right things, knowing what he may hope for,

and how to secure a hope that makes not ashamed, loving always the highest and best, knowing it when he sees it, and determined to secure it as his own possession—such a lad or maid will not be badly educated either for this life or a better life to come.

8. A better life to come—for you, my friends and fellow-teachers, do not allow your horizon to be bounded by what is seen and temporal. I am not here to preach to you, but you will perhaps agree with Thring, that prince of schoolmasters, when he said, “I don’t think much of my work; enough if in another world some one touches me on the shoulder and says, ‘Mr. Thring, I have been a better man for having known you.’”

I have talked long enough—too long—already, and am going to close with an extract which may or may not interest you, but which I quote because it deeply moved me nearly forty years ago, when I was beginning to teach. It appeared in a book which then had just been published. The book was little known and poorly reviewed, but it seems to have found a lodging-place in the affections of some people; for, strange to say, after the lapse of nearly forty years, having disappeared meanwhile, it was republished by special request a few months ago. It is called *Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster*. I got hold of a copy last year, and with a curious, indescribable feeling, turned to a page I used to know almost by heart and conned it over once again—

“And, O brother schoolmaster, remember evermore the exceeding dignity of our calling. It is not the holiest of all callings, but it runs near and parallel to the holiest. We have usually to deal with fresh

and unpolluted natures. Ours is a noble calling, but a perilous. We are under-shepherds of the Lord's little ones, and our business it is to lead them into green pastures, by the side of refreshing streams.

"Let us into our linguistic lessons introduce cunningly and imperceptibly all kinds of amusing stories; stories of the real kings of the earth that have reigned in secret, crownless and unsceptred, leaving the vain show of power to gilded toy-kings and make-believe statesmen; of the angels that have walked the earth in the guise of holy men and holier women; of the seraph singers, whose music will be echoing for ever; of the cherubim of power, that with the mighty wind of conviction and enthusiasm have winnowed the air of pestilence and superstition. . . .

"Then in the coming days, when you are fast asleep under the green grass, they will not speak lightly of you over their fruit and wine, mimicking your accent and retailing dull, insipid, boy-pleasantries. Enlightened by the experience of fatherhood, they will see with a clear remembrance your firmness in dealing with their moral faults, your patience in dealing with their intellectual weakness. And calling to mind the old schoolroom, they will think, 'Ah, it was good for us to be there. For unknown to us were made three tabernacles—one for us, and one for our schoolmaster, and one for Him that is the Friend of all children and Master of all schoolmasters.'

"Ah, believe me, brother mine, where two or three children are met together, unless He who is the spirit of gentleness be in the midst of them, then our Latin is but sounding brass and our Greek a tinkling cymbal."

So wrote a schoolmaster of forty years ago, and I think his words can hardly be read without emotion by the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses of to-day. It may not be our business to teach Greek and Latin, and our pupils may not belong to the circles of those who sit and tell stories over their fruit and wine; but the spirit of the words I have quoted may well abide with all teachers—in the nursery, in the kindergarten, in the dame's school, the primary school, the grammar school, and the public school, in the college and the university, in the Bible class and the pulpit. All we teachers need teaching. We are dull scholars ourselves, and our Master has been patient and gentle with us beyond compare. In His spirit let our work be done, and it will not fail. "For whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." But "Love never faileth—and now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

XII

Christ and Modern Criticism¹

A DICTIONARY of the Bible should be judged as a whole. Alphabetical as it is in arrangement, apparently fragmentary as it is in its character, and many as are the names of its writers, a true Bible dictionary will possess, under the direction of a strong and capable editor, a character of its own. The contributors will be carefully chosen, the articles will supplement one another, various aspects of one great theme will be presented from various points of view, and even a thing so apparently amorphous as a dictionary is seen to be highly and delicately organic. Bayle's Dictionary and the *Encyclopédie* of D'Alembert and Diderot are classics of "free thought." The last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* helped to mark and make an epoch. And if we mistake not, the publication of the two standard dictionaries of the Bible which coincides with the close of one century and the opening of another will be found later on to possess great historical and religious significance.

It is in no violation of this general canon that we propose to devote this article to one particular feature in the second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*,

¹ A Review of *Encyclopædia Biblica*, vol. ii. Reprinted from the *London Quarterly Review*, April 1901.

published a few weeks ago. When we were called to notice the first volume at the beginning of last year, we expressed some hesitation in giving a verdict, because one volume only of an elaborately planned work had appeared. The issue of a second—even though two more volumes are yet to come—largely relieves us of this hesitancy. It is quite possible to see now what the scope and purpose of the whole work is: he would be blind indeed who could not perceive it. The principles on which it will deal with the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, are plainly manifested in the three thousand closely printed columns which have now been given to the world. There can be no danger of misjudging the spirit and temper of the editors and their associates in relation to the cardinal questions on which their dictionary is to pronounce its judgment. Any careful reader might have been tolerably sure of this when he had studied the first volume, but the second leaves no room for doubt.

Especially is this the case with regard to what may be called the central verities of Christianity. It is these, after all, which furnish the most searching tests and criteria of the biblical critic and interpreter. "What think ye of Christ?" is a question which has proved a touchstone from the beginning; and the child whom Simeon took in his arms has been set "for the falling and rising up of many in Israel" and outside its boundaries. There may be a thousand differences of opinion about historical and literary questions in the case of so many-sided a book as the Bible—differences of importance in their place, yet sinking into comparative insignificance when the great themes of religion come into view. The appearance of this second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* has shed a flood of light

upon the attitude of its promoters towards these central and vital themes of Christianity. We propose, for reasons which will appear, to confine our attention to the article "Jesus," by the late Professor A. B. Bruce, the articles on "Gospels," by Dr. E. A. Abbott and Professor Schmiedel, and the article "John, son of Zebedee," also by Professor Schmiedel. Some other subsidiary articles will be referred to; but whoever has mastered these has possessed himself of the main message concerning Christian origins which this new Encyclopædia desires to give to the English-reading public. The editor, Dr. Cheyne, has chosen his contributors, fitted the articles so as to cover the ground requisite, and we may take it that now we know what he and those associated with him judge to be the fine flower and best results of research regarding the most important subjects of all to the Christian mind. Canon Cheyne has often spoken of what is known as "moderate" criticism in the superior and patronising tone of one who is wise enough to leave all that kind of unworthy compromise behind him. Now we are shown in the plainest way whither the "advanced" criticism which he favours tends, and unless we are mistaken the results will be found sufficiently startling. The perusal of these articles will produce keen and deep pain in all devout Christian minds, and it is with something like dismay that we contemplate the effect they are only too likely to produce in certain quarters. Whether this impression is just and sound our readers will have opportunity to judge, if they have the patience to follow this article to the end.

We should not like, however, to enter upon the subject proper without paying a fresh tribute to the many excellences which this Encyclopædia possesses.

The erudition of Dr. Cheyne, its editor-in-chief and the writer of a large proportion of the articles, is something phenomenal. Hardly anything within the scope of his subject seems to escape him, and he and Dr. Sutherland Black have shown great skill in the way in which the articles are planned, in the arrangement of the subject-matter, the facilities given for reference, and all that pertains to the editorial province. The list of contributors is imposing. They represent, it will be understood, scholars mainly of one type of thinking on biblical subjects, but all are men of mark whose words carry weight. A large proportion are continental scholars, as will be seen when we mention the names of Benzinger, Budde, Deissmann, Gauthier, Guthe, Jülicher, Kautzsch, Kusters, Marti, Nöldeke, Schmiedel, Tiele, and Wellhausen. But English scholarship is represented by the names of the late W. Robertson Smith, G. A. Smith, A. R. S. Kennedy, R. H. Charles, A. B. Bruce, and S. R. Driver — the last-mentioned contributing but little, in comparatively unimportant articles; while America is well represented by Professors F. Brown, Cone, Moore, Jastrow, Toy, Müller, Schmidt, and Gould. It is impossible even to name the chief articles which distinguish the volume, each of them learned, able, and instructive, though marked as of course by that extremely "advanced" tone of criticism which characterises the work as a whole. But when we say that Wellhausen writes on the Hexateuch, Guthe on Israel, Cheyne on Isaiah and Job, Müller on Egypt, Toy on Ezekiel and Ecclesiasticus, Moore on Genesis, Exodus, and Historical Literature, Charles on Eschatology, F. Brown on Geography, Robertson Smith, G. A. Smith, and Conder on Jerusalem, and that these are only specimens of elaborate articles

on great biblical themes, each one of which deserves thorough and careful study — whether or no the conclusions reached commend themselves in each case — it will be seen what a mine of biblical information is here presented. It does not surpass in interest or value the treatment of the same subjects to be found in Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, published by Messrs. Clark, which is marked by at least equal learning and much greater sobriety of judgment. But these two monumental works may be mentioned together as bringing within the reach of everyone for a few guineas a mass of biblical knowledge, furnished by the finest international scholarship of the day, the importance of which cannot well be exaggerated.

All the more, therefore, is it to be regretted that the tone of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* on the Gospels and the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ should be what here we find it. Dr. Abbott's article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* will be remembered, and his analysis of "sources" may be anticipated by those familiar with his published works. Dr. P. W. Schmiedel, Professor of New Testament Exegesis in Zürich, has been hitherto best known to scholars in this country by his commentary on Thessalonians and Corinthians in Holtzmann's *Hand-Kommentar*. He was more fully introduced to English readers by his articles on "Acts" and kindred subjects in the first volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. He undertakes to deal with the "credibility of the Synoptics" under the heading "Gospels"; and under "John, son of Zebedee," he discusses the authorship, date, and credibility of the "Johannine" writings. Professor A. B. Bruce needs no introduction to readers of this Review, and the sense of loss occasioned by his death is still fresh

amongst us. But most who remember the excellence of much of his work—especially his earlier work—as an interpreter of the New Testament will, we think, feel not a little troubled that he could write an article on “Jesus” which, partly by what it says and more by what it does not say, confirms the general impression produced by all the references to Christ and the Gospels which this volume contains.

It is the influence likely to be exerted by the articles as an organic whole, forming part of a standard English encyclopædia and arranged by an editor who is Canon of Rochester and Professor of Exegesis at Oxford, which forms the most serious feature in the case. When Dr. Abbott published on his own account the *Kernel and the Husk*, he spoke for himself, and neither the Church nor the world was greatly moved. What Dr. Schmiedel, as a learned and ingenious professor at Zürich, may think personally on these great themes is not profoundly important to any one in this country. But when the views of these writers, emphasised by the eloquent silence of Dr. Bruce, are put forward as the only utterance on the cardinal questions of Christianity, and the ripest and best conclusions of modern scholarship, in what claims to be a standard English Dictionary of the Bible, they acquire an importance which in themselves they would not severally possess. Let us see what these conclusions are, and what are the principles and methods by which they are reached.

It forms no part of our purpose to plunge into the intricacies of the “Synoptic problem,” or to discuss in detail the evidence for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. It is well understood that these are, within limits, still open questions of criticism. There is a growing consensus of opinion in favour of the

"two - document hypothesis," to account for the phenomena of agreement and disagreement in the Synoptists; that is, that two authorities, one the original of our "Mark," the other a collection of "Logia," were used by the authors both of "Matthew" and "Luke," the latter having access to other sources of his own. The long Johannine controversy, moreover, has resulted in a thrusting back of the date of the Gospel from the late period to which it was fashionable in "advanced" circles to assign it some decades ago, and the prevailing view at present would accept the authorship more than suggested by John xix. 35 and xxi. 20, that the disciple whom Jesus loved and whose name was from the beginning associated with this Gospel, was he who "bore witness of these things," and that "his witness is true."¹

But these questions are not settled, and perhaps never will be settled beyond the reach of controversy. The relations of the Synoptic narratives to one another are far from being as yet determined. There are difficulties in the way of accepting John the Apostle as the author of the Fourth Gospel, which no candid inquirer will ignore. Whilst many features of the Gospel point distinctly to Johannine authorship and authority, the late date at which it must have been written, the apparent discrepancies with the Synoptists, the subjectivity of the representation, and the style in

¹ Even Harnack, who ascribes this Gospel to the shadowy "presbyter John," admits that "in some way John, son of Zebedee, stands behind the Fourth Gospel cannot be denied" (*Chronol. der Altkhr. Lit.*, vol. i. pt. 2, p. 677). In his recent Berlin lectures, translated into English under the title, *What is Christianity?* Harnack takes up the position that "the Fourth Gospel cannot be taken as an historical authority in the proper meaning of the word" (p. 19).

which both the narrative and the discourses of Jesus are cast, seem to demand further explanation, and it cannot be matter for surprise that hypotheses of various kinds have been devised to account for these anomalies. So far as the writers in the *Encyclopædia* put forward their own views, more or less in accordance with, more or less differing from their predecessors, we welcome all that they have to say, whether we agree with them or not.

Dr. Abbott places St. Luke later than appears to us reasonable, and disparages him as an accurate historian. He minimises the external evidence for the genuineness of St. John's Gospel—the treatment of Papias, Justin, Irenæus, and Tatian being distinctly one-sided—while he recognises “its historical value in correcting impressions derived from the Synoptic Gospels,” and admits that while no Gospel soars so high, none stands more firmly, more practically, below.” Professor Schmiedel, as regards the Synoptists, seeks to discover “sources of sources.” He holds that no existing hypothesis is of itself a sufficient clue to guide us among the complexities of the facts; that the “original Mark” and the “Logia” document, supposed to have immediately preceded our canonical Gospels, were not the earliest written compositions giving an account of the life of Christ, and therefore, even if the problem be removed farther from solution than ever, criticism must take account of this earlier stage and devise some still more complicated hypothesis to account for the books of the three evangelists, since a simpler one will not serve. Professor Schmiedel holds further, that in the primitive Church there were at least two Johns of importance, the Apostle and the Elder; that John the Elder, resident in Asia Minor, is—not the author—but a

kind of redactor of the Apocalypse; that the Gospel is not the work of the son of Zebedee, nor of an eye-witness or contemporary of the events described, but of a late writer (probably after A.D. 132), who was "easily accessible to Alexandrian and Gnostic ideas." Even the First Epistle of John he will not assign to the author of the Gospel, closely related though these books seem to be; the two writings are by different authors, though they "belong to the same school of thought."

All these questions are capable of discussion, and it is the business of criticism to argue them out. We think it would not be difficult to show in detail that there is another side to the case ably drawn up by such accomplished advocates as Dr. Abbott and Professor Schmiedel—who, by the way, differ from one another upon several points of considerable importance. But the truth can only be arrived at by the fullest and most thorough investigation of rival hypotheses, and in the long-run nothing but good can come of the freest possible discussion. In the end truth will prevail. The whole work of literary criticism is concerned with the historical interpretation of literary documents, and biblical criticism has its *raison d'être* in the necessity for such an interpretation of biblical documents. Dogmatical exegesis is not enough, and our ground of complaint with regard to the writers in the Encyclopædia is not that they are thoroughgoing biblical critics, and have put forward theories with which we happen not to agree. If we do not propose to discuss these theories in detail, it is not because we think them incontrovertible, nor because such a discussion would transgress the limits of a review article. If our ability and the available space were greater, it would still be impossible to *demonstrate* conclusions concerning

the date and authorship of the Gospels. Much more serious issues lie behind untouched, which do not really belong to literary criticism, but which form the actually determining elements in the case. We are glad that Professor Schmiedel is candid enough to acknowledge this. He says (§ 154)—

The chronological question is in this instance a very subordinate one. Indeed, if our Gospels could be shown to have been written from A.D. 50 onwards, or even earlier, we should not be under any necessity to withdraw our conclusions as to their contents; we should, on the contrary, only have to say that the indubitable transformation in the original tradition had taken place much more rapidly than one might have been ready to suppose. The credibility of the gospel history cannot be established by an earlier dating of the Gospels, etc.

It is the trustworthiness of the narratives, at least in their main outlines, which forms the chief practical issue for most Christians, and it has long been made clear to careful observers that much current "criticism," whilst professedly busy with its own work of determining date and authorship, had virtually prejudged the whole question of credibility, and would not accept the gospel story at any price. It is well that this should be frankly acknowledged. Let us see on what principles and by what methods such a result is reached.

Professor Schmiedel lays it down in one place (§ 137) that it would be wrong "to start from any such postulate or axiom as that 'miracles' are impossible." He contents himself with starting from the axiom that they are incredible. The reasons that he gives for questioning the "historical precision" of the evangelists are almost childish. They are said to contradict one

another, because while Mark says all the sick were brought to Jesus and He healed some, Matthew says they brought many and He healed all; or because, on the journey to Jerusalem, Mark says that Jesus taught the multitude, Matthew that He healed them. Differences of detail concerning the curing of the blind and the cursing of the fig tree are naturally made the most of. The fact that one evangelist has recorded more events of a supernatural kind than another does not warrant our believing the story containing fewer miracles; it only shows that he who records least has probably inserted more supernatural incidents than narrators who preceded him.

But these are not the real reasons for rejecting the historicity of these narratives. Professor Schmiedel shows plainly the principles on which he proceeds. He begins (§ 131) by laying it down that as all the Gospels were written by "worshippers" of the "hero" Jesus, the first importance is to be attached to "features which cannot be deduced merely from the fact of this worship," and in this case first and foremost he recognises as true "the two great facts that Jesus had compassion for the multitude and that He preached with power, not as the scribes." After a close examination of details, in which all incidents implying the miraculous are contemptuously rejected, Professor Schmiedel naïvely says, "The foregoing sections may have sometimes seemed to raise a doubt whether any credible elements were to be found in the Gospels at all," and he therefore desires to lay "emphatic stress" upon certain passages which form "the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus." They are—let all votaries of "science" listen carefully to this—the question, "Why callest thou Me good?" the state-

ment that blasphemy against the Son of Man may be forgiven, the fact that the relations of Jesus thought Him to be beside Himself, the statement that "of that day and hour knoweth no one—neither the Son but the Father," and the cry upon the cross, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" These passages, showing as they do that Jesus was "completely a man," prove His real existence and satisfy us that the Gospels contain a few absolutely trustworthy facts concerning Him. It is not a question of testimony, of priority of evidence, whether a statement "comes from original Mark, from Logia, from oral tradition, or from any other quarter that may be alleged. The relative priority becomes a matter of indifference, because the absolute priority—that is, the origin in real tradition—is certain."

This is frank, and we now know where we are. We venture to think that if we had put such assertions as the above into the mouth of a rationalist critic, pointing out five such "foundation-pillars" for a trustworthy life of Jesus, and declaring that early evidence was in the critic's view of no value, his mind being previously made up as to what the order of tradition must be, the statement would have been denounced as an unworthy caricature. The writer, however, who has been chosen by Canon Cheyne to tell Englishmen "the true truth" concerning the Gospels is found declaring that the main fabric of those narratives is utterly untrustworthy, and that to a few statements, embedded in the mass of myths, we owe it that there is any foundation for the existence of Jesus at all. Also, that this conclusion is independent of the evidence—the date, earlier or later, which may be assigned to the documents or their sources—that to bring our narratives within a few years of the death of Jesus would make no difference,

except that "the *indubitable* transformation"¹ would then have taken place more rapidly than might have been expected. Consequently, all evidence tending to bring the dates of our Gospels as late as possible is naturally welcomed and dwelt upon, not to say exaggerated in importance.

It may be urged, however, that this is only the utterance of one extreme, or, as he has been called, "fanatically rationalist" writer. Even so, it is strange that to him should have been intrusted the sacred charge of dealing with the credibility of the Gospels. But Professor Schmiedel does not stand alone. Dr. Abbott's views about miracles are well known, though the part of the subject intrusted to him does not bring them into prominence. Dr. A. B. Bruce writes the article on "Jesus"—the name is significant. We naturally wonder what he will say concerning the birth of our Lord. His words are very few, and we find amongst them a cross-reference to the article "Joseph, husband of Mary," written by Canon Cheyne. He tells us that

the evidence that primitive Christian tradition knew anything about the father of Jesus is very slight, and considering the high probability that the narratives respecting the birth of Jesus in Matthew i., Luke i., ii., iii., are partly Haggadic or edifying tales like those in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* . . . it becomes the historical student to confess that the name of the father of Jesus is, to say the least, extremely uncertain.

The description "Haggadic or edifying tales" is of course a euphemism for fables, and it is easy to see from the whole article that "the historical student" is to be quite sure that Jesus was born in the ordinary

¹ *Italics* ours,

course of an earthly father, though it is very doubtful whether his name was Joseph.

Of course we do not hold Dr. Bruce responsible for the words of Canon Cheyne. But there is nothing in his article in any way to contradict them. He tells us that the books which bear the name of Gospels are "of varying value from a historical point of view." He judges Mark to come nearest to the primitive tradition, Matthew comes next by one or two removes, Luke is less trustworthy, John is ignored. On the story of the Passion of Jesus he says that "even in its most historic version, it is not pure truth, but truth mixed with doubtful legend." As to the Resurrection, Dr. Bruce has hardly a word to say except that "Christianity could not have entered on its victorious career unless the followers of the Crucified had believed that He not only died but also rose again." How little they were justified in this belief readers may gather from the very unsatisfactory paragraph in which Dr. Bruce deals with Christ's words about the future (§ 32) and his silence concerning the evidence for the resurrection. On the contrary, in another paragraph (§ 19), he does not conceal his distaste for the whole subject of miracles, and with regard to Christ's works of healing says, "the *miraculousness* of the healing ministry is not the point in question." Supposing certain "reports" of healing acts are fairly established, it still remains to inquire whether they imply any corresponding facts, whether, *e.g.*, "the leper was cured or only pronounced clean," whether the bread that fed the thousands was miraculously produced, or "drawn forth by the bearing of Jesus from the stores in possession of the crowd." After some discussion of this kind Dr. Bruce goes on to say that "there is one thing"—and apparently only

one thing—"about which we may have comfortable certainty. Whether miraculous or not, whether the works of a mere man or of one who is a man and more, these healing acts are a revelation of the love of Jesus, a manifestation of His 'enthusiasm of humanity.' . . . He was minded to do all the good in the world He could." And the main lesson to be learned is that in Jesus we have one who is "in a large, grand, human way the friend of men, bearing by sympathy their sicknesses as well as their sorrows and sins as a burden in His heart."

We are probably not justified in viewing this article as adequately representing the whole of the late Professor Bruce's personal belief. We have no desire to do so; nor is it any part of our business to judge a man so able, so learned, and so devout. What we are concerned with is the fact that we have in this Encyclopædia an article from his pen in which there is nothing inconsistent with the view of a purely human Jesus, born of a human father, who did not rise from the dead, who may or may not have worked some rather remarkable cures, who was (§ 33) in many respects "the child of His time and people," but whose "spiritual intuitions are pure truth, valid for all ages." The teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels—the Fourth Gospel being studiously ignored—when carefully purged of supernatural elements and sifted by "modern criticism" remains as *the* contribution of Jesus to religious truth, teaching of great value, in which "God, man, and the moral ideal" are most "truly and happily conceived." Far be it from us to undervalue the value of this teaching taken by itself. As Dr. Bruce says, we are only now beginning to perceive the full significance of much of the teaching of Jesus, and it

will doubtless be long before "full effect shall be given to His radical doctrine of the dignity of man." What we are anxious, however, at the moment to point out is that this article harmonises with the others we have quoted in its general conceptions of the untrustworthiness of the canonical Gospels and the slender residuum of fact concerning the man Jesus which is left to us when "modern criticism" has done its work. That the author of the *Training of the Twelve* should be the author of an article so significant as this in its utterances, and still more ominous in its silence, is to our thinking greatly to be regretted, even though the later work of the lamented writer had somewhat prepared our minds for a change in his doctrinal position.

This attitude on the part of the rationalistic school of critics towards the Christ of the Gospels is of course nothing new. But now that it is being forced upon the attention of Englishmen as the only one that is "truly scientific," it is time that such a tremendous assumption should be fully faced and thoroughly examined. Of course "science," properly speaking, has little to do with the matter. The science of biblical criticism is concerned with the dates, authorship, and mutual relations of literary documents. It is not that conclusive evidence on these points leads to unbelief in miracles, but rather that incredulity concerning the miraculous leads to a post-dating of documents. It is not a question of learning. Scholars in many respects far more able than the acute critics whom we have been quoting have come to very different conclusions, with all the evidence before them which Abbott, Bruce, and Schmiedel adduce. One has only to turn to the masterly article on "Jesus Christ" by Professor Sanday

in Hastings' Bible Dictionary, or his article "Gospels" in the later edition of Smith's Dictionary, to see what a different complexion may be put upon the same facts by one who is no dogmatist or votary of tradition, but an eminently broad, fair, and open-minded theologian. Zahn in Germany, and Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort in England—whom sundry restless critics are already declaring out of date—are names of men at least as eminent and quite as candid as any rationalists in either country. We do not plead for any diminution in the freedom of criticism proper. The truth concerning the Bible viewed as literature can only be reached by free discussion, and we are eager for truth at all costs. Coleridge's dictum is constantly applicable: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."

That of which we complain is not science, it is dogma. With certain documents, the dates of which may be approximately ascertained, before us, the problem is to get at the facts behind them. But the school of writers in question have not sufficiently open minds to entertain one conceivable hypothesis—that of supernatural intervention. They do not say—Huxley would not allow it to be said—that miracles are *impossible*. But all their reasoning implies that miracles are *incredible*, or at least that the general "distaste" for the miraculous should lead to its being disregarded. The "worshippers of a hero" are sure to exaggerate, the followers of an Oriental hero two thousand years ago were sure to attribute miracle to him; and this in the view of these critics of to-day is conclusive that the mythopœic faculty must have been

at work, however short the time for it to operate—ay, even if contemporaries can be proved to testify to the supernatural, they are of course not to be believed. The age was credulous, research (it is said) is revealing the gradual growth and accretion of tradition, it is questionable whether we can penetrate to the earliest stage in the case of Jesus; hence criticism will disregard all “Haggadic or edifying tales,” and leave a few “foundation-pillars” only for the “truly scientific” student. But any one who closely examines such reasoning as this will see that biblical criticism proper plays a very small part in it, and that “science” is not responsible for the conclusions reached, unless it is a postulate of science that miracles are incredible. It comes to this, that no evidence which could by any reasonable possibility be supposed to have come from the period in which Jesus lived could to-day establish miracle. We are not saying that the evidence we have is the strongest possible; we are not denying the presence of difficulties in the narratives when closely examined; we are not asserting that the evangelists are “historians” in the full modern sense of the word, or that we can obtain from them critically sifted testimony such as modern historians require. We are convinced that the evidence, when fairly viewed, is strong and sufficient; and we hold that its main strength cannot be seen when the narratives of the evangelists are taken to pieces, separated from their context, and considered quite apart from the whole series of events to which they belong. But our chief complaint against these writers is not that they do not give the evangelists a fair chance, though that is true. The real difficulty is that their attitude towards miracle is such that they will believe almost anything rather

than accept the hypothesis that the Son of Man was also Son of God, and that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

It will be well, therefore, to attempt a brief summary of the kind of reply to which the writers in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* lay themselves open. Their case is, that the narratives of the Gospels are comparatively late, and in any case untrustworthy; that if we could reach the "original" tradition, we should find it free from the accretion of legend which has gathered round it; that the records as they stand are so loose in construction and inconsistent in testimony that they cannot be relied upon as history, and only a few fragments of fact and teaching remain as credible records of the existence of a certain Jesus of Nazareth, who has been revered for so many centuries by so many millions as the Founder of the Christian religion.

The answer is that

I. The narratives in the four Gospels may be proved to be at least somewhat earlier than the critics allege; that they point to still earlier (oral or written) traditions behind them, which must have contained in *substance* the main contents of our canonical Gospels. The letters of Paul—the dates of the chief of which have been conclusively ascertained—abundantly confirm this view of the history; viz. the acceptance by the Christian churches within about twenty years of Christ's death of the main features of gospel history, including the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This part of the argument we do not attempt to work out in detail. It involves minute examination of authorities, and, when all historical research is over,

room will still be left for differences in critical opinion, nor can anything like demonstration, to compel belief, be attained.¹ It may be said, however, that Harnack's now famous declaration in his *Chronologie der Altkhr. Lit.*, concerning the confirmation in the main of the chronological framework in which tradition had placed the books of the New Testament, is very significant as coming from him, and fairly represents the trend of opinion. But without pressing chronological details,

II. It must further be argued—Which is the more probable hypothesis to account for the facts thus ascertained? Granted the existence of our four Gospels at a period which might be agreed on for the sake of argument—Professor Schmiedel admits that if they could be placed as early as A.D. 50, his argument is not invalidated, and we should not press for earlier dates than from A.D. 65 to 70 for Matthew and Mark, 75 to 80 for Luke, and 90 to 95 for John—granted also the existence of certain Pauline documents dated from A.D. 50 to 60, and the state of belief in the churches of that period which Paul's epistles imply—what then? How does the hypothesis advocated in these articles work out? Those who refuse to admit the existence of supernatural elements in the person, life, and work

¹ An exceedingly able book, though decidedly advanced in its criticism, which has come into our hands since this sentence was written, is Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*. It is written by an ardent disciple of Dr. Bruce, who rejoices that his teacher "cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and the glories of blue water." But when the cable is cut, we ask what kind of compass is on board the vessel and what kind of a hand is at the helm. There is no question of Mr. Moffatt's learning; but, as the volume entitled *Supernatural Religion* proved a generation ago, something more than rationalistic learning is needed for the solution of these supreme questions of religion.

of Jesus Christ, have to face the following alternative incredibilities, as they appear to us.

1. It is quite incredible that such a rapid growth could take place in the belief of miracle as attaching to the ministry of a man who in fact worked no miracle, but died a shameful death as a discredited prophet. For it must be remembered that the "triple tradition," which lies some way behind the canonical Synoptics, is as full of miracle as any part of the gospel tradition, and that a large part of the teaching of Jesus is inseparably bound up with miracles and signs, being unintelligible without them. Yet all this "accretion" must have taken place in a few years, in spite of the hatred and opposition of Jewish leaders, who could easily have exposed the delusions or misrepresentations of too ardent disciples.¹

2. It is quite incredible that narratives so artless and so full of personal and graphic touches—touches that are meaningless and useless except as transcripts of actual fact—are due either to deliberate invention or unconscious "myth-making." This argument applies only to certain narratives, and is cumulative in character. But we might instance as examples the story of Peter and John at the tomb in John xx., the stories of Mary and Thomas in the same chapter, and those in the epilogue to the Gospel, chap. xxi. In the Synoptists also, narratives containing these personal and artlessly

¹ We are quite aware that Dr. Abbott has contended in his *Kernel and the Husk* and his *St. Thomas of Canterbury* that such a rapid growth of myth is a common phenomenon. The question cannot be argued out in a paragraph, but the conditions of every case need to be separately studied, and if Jesus worked no miracles the conditions in this case were wholly unfavourable to such growth.

artistic touches are marked by a belief in the supernatural inextricably bound up with the fabric of the story. To reject the supernatural element without rejecting the whole story is impossible.

3. It is quite incredible that a belief in the resurrection of Christ should have arisen in the way described by naturalistic writers. This has been a standing difficulty of rationalistic critics, and Professor Schmiedel's attempt to remove it is no more successful than those of his predecessors. We do not deny the fragmentary and unsystematic character of the accounts that have come down to us, or the difficulty of interweaving them into an orderly whole. But this is as nothing compared with the difficulties encountered by those who deny the resurrection altogether. According to Professor Schmiedel, Jesus had never given any intimation on the subject, He had by hypothesis worked no miracle, and none of His disciples could have had the slightest expectation of a resurrection from the dead. Yet within a very few days of Christ's death some of His disciples in Galilee imagined that they saw Him; the belief spread so rapidly and generally that the tomb was never examined to see whether the body still remained in it, until long after, when such examination was of no use. Enemies as well as friends, it would appear, were content that this simple test should not be applied, or else it was never thought of. The "visions" in question included the utterance of many profound and pregnant words on the part of the supposed Jesus; none of these were in reality ever spoken, but were a later invention of the handful of ignorant, discouraged, and scattered disciples, who conceived the idea that their Master had appeared and addressed them thus, and who then excogitated for

themselves the idea of a church, which was built upon the very foundation-stone of an entirely imaginary resurrection from the dead.

4. It is quite incredible that the *whole* picture of Jesus Christ as contained in the four Gospels should have "grown up" in the fashion implied by these writers. The critics are so occupied in investigating details that they seem to have no time to see the facts steadily and see them *whole*. In the gospel painting there is surely something to be observed beside canvas of a given texture, determinable by the archæologist to belong to a certain date, and certain splashes of pigment more or less grimy, which have "accreted" in spots and the exact date and colour of which may be determined by the use of a strong magnifying-glass. The masterpiece must be viewed as a whole, and then its main feature is seen to be a Figure, a Face, a Presence. Despite the variety of details and the apparent or real inconsistencies in some of the narratives, a Whole appears, for which no rationalistic critic has yet accounted by his analysis of sources and "sources of sources." It is the old fallacy of materialistic evolution over again. Out of mindless matter, by means of an infinite number of infinitesimal variations more or less casually produced, may be evolved Mind, Order, and much besides. From the life of an ordinary Jewish carpenter, who had compassion on the multitudes and spake not as the scribes, may be evolved, within twenty years, by the exercise of the mythopœic faculty on the part of ignorant, unspiritual, but imaginative persons, not working in concert but each contributing to the steadily growing mass of tradition, a Figure, divine yet human, which has arrested the gaze of generations and revolutionised the history of

the world. And men who believe this cannot believe in miracles!

5. It is quite incredible that the beliefs recorded in the New Testament, which on any hypothesis were beliefs on the part of fully established Christian communities long before A.D. 63, of the death of St. Paul, were based upon a fundamental delusion. Imagination can do something, hope can do more, faith can do most of all, towards the building up of religious ideals; but if this particular belief in a Person, and a lofty religious ideal inseparably connected with Him, could be proved to have for its very cornerstone either a conscious invention, or an ignorant delusion, or a number of physical hallucinations, or a combination of all these, it would stand alone in history. If Christianity were such a moral monstrosity as this, then the world may rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on nothing.

It may be said that biblical criticism has nothing to do with these religious and "dogmatic" considerations, that the analyst of the Gospels is not bound to take into account the beliefs of the Christian Church and explain their genesis, even as evidenced in the epistles of St. Paul. But students of literature should always be students of history, and no literary critic can do his work properly unless he is an historical critic also. It is in their judgment of history and religion that these critics so signally fail. If criticism concerns itself with the historical interpretation of a great religious movement at all, it must do so "all in all" or "not at all." Testimony acknowledged to be of a certain date must be admitted according to its merits, without being barred by the tacit axiom that "miracles do not happen." The very question at issue in this case is whether they did or

did not happen, and a critic who is persuaded that they did not must be prepared with a hypothesis to cover *all* the facts. When he asserts the historic incredibility of miracles, it is unscientific for him to ignore certain other historic incredibilities, at the existence of which we have hinted, though we have not presented them with anything like their proper force and cogency.

III. But it may be replied that the best part of Christianity may be retained without a belief in "miracle." This brings us to another line of reply, which affects chiefly the position taken up by Dr. Bruce. Of the genuineness of the Christian feeling and spirit of the late professor, and to a large extent of his Christian faith, there can be no question. But, especially in his later years, he was wont to make such concessions to the assailants of Christianity that he sometimes surrendered the very key of the position. This was noticeably the case with regard to miracle, and in the article before us there are remarks concerning Christ's work—*e.g.* that "Jesus was not a thaumaturge, bent on creating astonishment"—which surely evince a strange misconception of the position.

Christianity is bound up with miracle. The super-natural is not for it a superfluous garment, which may be stripped off without loss, or perhaps with advantage. It belongs to the very essence of the Christian faith. Not thaumaturgy, not the working of wonders to make men gape and stare, but the delivery of a message from God, with credentials which give it a character and authority of its own. Christianity not contradicts, but transcends nature; it is based on a "super-natural" which forms, together with the "natural," one vast kingdom of natural-supernatural, in which the foremost figure is the divine-human Person

of Jesus Christ our Lord. We do not deny that a very real and valuable religious belief may exist without this, though it hardly deserves what it often claims, the name Christian. The views which Professor Bruce's article would lead us to be content with, are what Lessing called by a misleading phrase, "the religion of Jesus," as opposed to the Christian religion. There is a world of difference between a Theism such as Dr. Martineau's, with Jesus—a dim, fragmentary, and shadowy figure—as its ethical prophet, and that belief in "our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours," which characterised Paul the apostle, the writers and the churches of the New Testament, as it characterises the orthodox Christianity of to-day.

And this Christ is essentially one with the Christ of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. It sounds plausible in many ears to say that we should travel back from canonical Gospels which represent a third stage of tradition to an original Mark and book of Logia which form its second stage, and thence to "sources of sources" which form its first stage, and presumably provide us with a non-miraculous Jesus. But, apart from the hypothetical character of these earlier stages and the mass of early evidence in Paul and other writers which would be conclusive did no anti-supernatural prejudice exist, it must be added that this hypothetical non-miraculous religion is not the Christianity of history. *It is not that which has done the work.* For a religious work has been done by Christianity, to which history affords no parallel; and pure Theism, with Jesus as its foremost teacher, is not the religion which has accomplished it. When such Theism has been revived, as it has again and again in

the course of centuries, it has proved sterile and ineffective—a barren stock, with miscarrying womb and dry breasts, incapable of nourishing and bringing up spiritual children, like the gospel of the New Testament. This unquestionable fact does not of itself prove the truth of Christianity, but it adds immense corroborative force to other arguments, and goes to show that the hypothesis which would set aside the greater part of the doctrine of the New Testament as *Aberglaube* is utterly inadequate to explain the facts and the meaning of history.

IV. But is it not possible to roll back upon the critics of the Encyclopædia the reproach which implicitly, if not explicitly, they seek to fasten upon “conservative theologians”? What is the “science” in the name and for the sake of which so much of the faith which has regenerated humanity is to be given up? Is it not these critics, after all, who are belated? Are they not trying to work with tools which, in the hands of Paulus, Strauss, Baur, and a long succession of rationalists for more than a hundred years, have been proved to be feeble and futile? The theories of the rationalists have greatly varied during the latter part of the eighteenth and a large part of the nineteenth century; but their fundamental position was the same, and its weakness has been found out. The days of the “science” which ignored the spiritual and tried to banish philosophy are passing away. The reign of mechanism is nearly over. The tyranny which sought to rule the whole realm of truth by the methods of physical science, and to explain away the higher faculties of man in terms of a lower order of “nature,” the limits of which must on no account be transcended, was at its zenith in the ’seventies, and has been very

mighty for more than a generation; but its power is broken—we trust never to be restored.

Physical science has taught and will continue to teach mankind lessons, which theologians need constantly to bear in mind. The science of biblical criticism has taught and will continue to teach truths which certain dogmatists have been loth to admit, but which Protestants at least should never be afraid to face. But these and other sciences, some of them still very young, must learn their limits. We cannot ascertain the whole truth about man if we begin with tacit axioms, supposed to be inculcated by science, which would interpret the higher faculties of man in terms of the lower, and shut him out from that "supernatural" world to which on one side he as surely belongs as on another side he belongs to the world of "nature." Signs are not wanting that the twentieth century will appreciate this better than the nineteenth has done, and what we must take leave to call the narrow and shallow rationalism of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* is not a real advance, but an attempt to put back the hands of the clock, which will not, we trust, even for a time, succeed.

We are not blind, however, to the dangers which are likely to arise from the publication of these articles. It is because we are sensible of them that we have felt it important to point out the character and tendencies of the articles and to indicate their deficiencies, at the risk of wearying our readers with arguments which are not new. The conclusions put forward with so much confidence are sure to be quoted in certain quarters as containing the results arrived at by the "best" and most "fearless" critics, men who are not "bound" by mere traditions and an irrational conservatism. This

tone, with its assumption of superior knowledge, is not lacking in the articles themselves, and it will doubtless reappear in the literature which is likely to follow in their wake. We are not afraid for those who have the time and ability, and will take the trouble, to study the whole subject. It is neither possible nor desirable to fetter discussion. But a publication like the *Encyclopædia Biblica* speaks with a measure of authority, and we regret that a work of such scholarship and ability should have put forward, on the great subject of the origins of Christianity, one narrow rationalistic theory as the only one worthy the consideration of "truly scientific" students. At Oxford, and amongst the alumni of some theological colleges, the views here put forward may easily tend to become fashionable among men who desire to be known as "free" and "advanced" thinkers. They will henceforward be able to quote more than isolated teachers as warranting this attitude towards Christianity. We especially regret that the names of Canon Cheyne and Dr. Bruce—both deservedly honoured in the Anglican, Presbyterian, and other churches of Britain—should be found as standing in some sense sponsors for this attempt to overthrow confidence in the gospel narratives, to strip Christianity of its supernatural elements and credentials, and to substitute a human Jesus, of whose ministry little or nothing can be accurately ascertained, for the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament, Son of man and Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

XIII

The Christian Ideal¹

IT is the glory and the trouble of man that he can form ideals. The ideal is more than the idea; it is the idea sitting in judgment upon the actual, discriminating and deciding, that it may approve or condemn. It is not formed out of the actual, though it lives and moves in close relation to it; the ideal adds to the dull grey, neutral atmosphere of common day

the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream,

which is never far from any of us. Its existence is based upon an underlying postulate which finds various expressions in philosophy, in ethics, and in religion, but one which is necessary to the sage and the saint alike. Such a postulate belongs indeed to the very constitution of the human mind in its normal working—a demand for one essential unity in the universe, one all-comprehending principle, one ruling purpose, however impossible it be for man at present to grasp it; one deep significance in the infinitely varied and elusive riddle of the world; one goal—dim, remote,

¹ A Review of *Ancient Ideals*. By Henry Osborn Taylor. Reprinted from the *London Quarterly Review*, January 1901.

at present inconceivable, which nevertheless shall be reached at last, when the race is run and the pilgrimage is over. As is written in the Koran, "God said—Heaven and earth and all between them think ye they were created in jest, and that all shall not return to Me?"

It is usual to compare nations and religions on the level of history, according to the practice and actual attainments of men. It is even more instructive to compare human *aims* and *standards* in succeeding generations, to estimate and compare the prevailing *hopes* which have animated men in various ages, in their religious and national life. For it is the power to form ideals far transcending immediate realisation which has given meaning to national history and guided national progress. These aims and hopes have often been what men call "blind," that is, imperfectly, half-consciously entertained; but none the less it is these that have caused the deep-seated "divine discontent" which has urged men onwards as with an irresistible impulse, and formed the driving power alike of leaders and followers in the forward march of history. The hope that "springs eternal in the human breast" is fed from hills high above the level of man's ordinary thoughts and ways. It is due to the faculty man possesses—God-given, as we must believe—a power to judge and an impulse to transcend existing conditions and standards. "Man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a heaven for?" The poet's argument may not pass muster with the scientist who is sure there is no heaven, or the philosopher who questions whether such there be, but thinks it desirable to invent one; but poet and philosopher and scientist may learn much from history—the history of human ideals.

Can such a history be traced? Is there order, continuity, progress in man's dreams of what might be, in his struggles after what ought to be? To answer this question we should not turn to the *Republic* of Plato, the *Utopia* of More, the *New Atlantis* of Bacon, the *Oceana* of Harrington, or the *News from Nowhere* and *Looking Backward* of later and more frivolous times. Such deliberate fictions have their uses, but they are straws on the surface, which do not always show which way the stream is flowing. Rather should we study the history of religions and penetrate as far as may be to the inmost significance and tendency of each, comparing its theories and precepts with the genius and temperament, the actual life and conduct of the peoples who profess to have been guided by it. Taking this view of the subject, therefore, can any unity or continuity, any clear advancement or progress be traced in man's hopes and ideals? Has there been any "increasing purpose," any widening or deepening of men's best thoughts for themselves and for the race, "in the process of the suns"? And if so, what is the relation of Christianity to such a history?

Such are some of the questions which the author of *Ancient Ideals* essays to answer in the two handsome volumes before us. Mr. H. Osborn Taylor is an American, as his English readers soon perceive. So far as we are aware, this is his first work, and there are some indications in the style—especially in the earlier portion of the book—that the writer is hardly a practised hand. But the work as a whole is one of the most interesting and suggestive surveys of the subject that we know. The plan is excellent. It is proposed to treat human development from the standpoint of the ideals of the different races, as these ideals disclose themselves in the art

and literature, in the philosophy and religion, and in the conduct and political fortunes of each race.

The writer has sought

to make clear the nature of the contribution made by each race to the stages of human growth reached before the Christian era ; and to indicate in what respects these contributions became permanent elements of humanity, and thus elements of its further possibilities—possibilities that find in Christianity perfect conditions for their final realisation.

The working out of this comprehensive scheme is on the whole—with some drawbacks which we shall attempt to point out—worthy of its high argument. Mr. Osborn Taylor is sufficiently master of his authorities to furnish a study of his subject in the full light of recent historical research. It is no easy task to give a bird's-eye view of the intellectual and spiritual condition of Egypt, Babylonia, India, Greece, and Rome, so far as the latest and best knowledge of those nations carries us. Such books as Maurice's *Religions of the World* and Hardwick's *Christ and other Masters* were useful in many respects in their time ; but they were comparatively slight in outline, and they have been left far behind by the researches of the last thirty years. Mr. Taylor has based his work, as far as possible, on original sources, as his scholarly notes indicate. But he possesses gifts quite as important for his task as erudition—the insight which is necessary to interpret facts, to understand their relative proportions, and the skill to arrange his materials clearly and effectively, so as to bring his readers into direct contact with first-hand evidence, without overburdening his pages with detail. He is wise in giving his strength to Greece and Rome. The chapters on Homer, on “Greek

Principles of Life," and on the "Genius of Rome" are amongst the best in the book.

Mr. Taylor is, moreover, fair and impartial in his sketches. He has no thesis to propound in the interests of orthodox Christianity. He does not write as an apologist, who uses "false" religions simply as foils to the true; but neither does he, after the fashion of many modern sceptics, seek to explain Christian truth as a mere product of evolution, which in its turn—an epoch supposedly close upon us—is to make way for another and a more worthy apotheosis of human thoughts and hopes. The account of Judaism and Christianity contained in the second volume is written from the standpoint of a thoughtful, undogmatic, and candidly critical believer; and whilst the author avows his frank acceptance of the conclusions of at least the more moderate biblical critics, he has written nothing which can offend the taste or the reverent beliefs of the orthodox Christian. On the contrary, such a reader will find much to confirm his faith as well as to broaden his ideas. Mr. Taylor's survey of history closes with the second or third century of our era—a period sufficiently advanced for Christianity to have fairly revealed its character and established its position among the nations.

Where the work as a whole is so good, it would be ungracious to dwell on minor defects. The very excellences of the book make us regret that so many lesser flaws should have been allowed to disfigure it. Without dwelling upon trifles which are irritating in a work so valuable and interesting as this, we may pass to the subject-matter of the volume.

It is seen at once that many questions are involved in the determination of what are called, somewhat

vaguely, national ideals. Mr. Osborn Taylor's book would have gained by a clearer statement at the outset of the factors implied in their formation. Kant's three great questions—to which mankind are always seeking answers—are well known. What can we know? What ought we to do? What may we hope for? These are more closely connected together than at first sight might appear. And in the formation of an "ideal," whether by individual or nation, there is implied a judgment concerning the world as it is and the government of the universe, if government there be; also a judgment concerning man, his position, powers, and possibilities; also a judgment concerning the type of individual life which is esteemed most desirable and admirable; but above and beyond all these things there is implied a judgment concerning the future of the human race on earth and a decision concerning the prospects of life beyond the grave. What we mean is, that the character of the "ideal" formed will depend upon the answers given to all these fundamental questions. They are bound up together in the formation of a system by an individual thinker and in the character of a religion which may be accepted by a nation or a race. God, Duty, Immortality—these three can hardly be considered apart. If with George Eliot we pronounce the first inconceivable and the third unbelievable, the character of the second—which she held to be absolute and peremptory—is seriously and vitally affected.

If this be so, it is clear that a writer has a formidable task before him who undertakes to trace out the history of men's thoughts on these high themes from the Egypt of (say) 3000 years B.C. to the Roman Empire of 300 A.D. It is no part of our object to

follow Mr. Osborn Taylor in his detailed survey. Suffice it to say that he allots some hundred pages only to Egypt, Chaldæa, China, India, and Persia, whilst his description of Greece covers two hundred and fifty pages, one hundred and fifty are devoted to Rome, about as many to Israel, and nearly two hundred to Christianity. The danger, of course, in these wide surveys of ancient religions and *Weltanschauungen* is that of hasty and superficial generalisation. He who would describe the "genius" of Buddhism in fifty pages must be scholar enough to have mastered original authorities, possess insight enough to fasten upon the features that really matter, and mental detachment enough to sympathise with all that is excellent in that strange and fascinating religion, without losing himself in its bewildering abysses. Two books that occur to us, published within the last few years, each interesting and suggestive, have failed to avoid the initial difficulties of such generalisation—Miss Wedgwood's *Moral Ideal* and Bishop Boyd Carpenter's *Permanent Elements of Religion*. The latter especially is essentially subjective. The bishop lays down three elements of man's nature which must be met by any religion which claims to be permanent—as we might say in any "ideal" which is to be adequate and abiding—Dependence, Fellowship, and Progress. He then examines what he calls the three universal religions, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity, to see how far these elements of a satisfactory ideal are met in each.

This is an example of the way in which such a subject should *not* be treated. Mr. Osborn Taylor has rightly pursued the historical method, and he gives his readers the opportunity very largely to judge for themselves concerning the accuracy of his generalisations, by

quoting in some detail from original authorities. Comparing the summary given in *Ancient Ideals* of the religions of Egypt and India with others known to us, we should say that Mr. Taylor's account will bear comparison with any drawn up on the same small scale. What strikes one, for example, in the religion of ancient Egypt, as in some other ancient religions, is the unconscious way in which inconsistencies are allowed to stand side by side. On this point Mr. Taylor says, Egyptian thought

analysed nothing, had neither clearness nor consistency, nor power to discriminate and classify. In consequence ethics remained unsystematised precept ; with all the picturesque elaboration of a future life, no thought of spiritual immortality was reached ; the religion saw no inconsistency between one god and many ; and the race's mighty material accomplishment lacked ennobling aim.

And again, "Astounding is she (Egypt) at the time of her monumental beginning ; but this strange ancient child fulfils no promise as the centuries pass." We should like to trace out the bearing of this upon the Egyptian conception of a future life. The strange contrast between Egypt and Israel in this respect has often been commented on, but seldom rightly understood. Theologians who are disposed to classify religions according to the measure of revelation vouchsafed concerning a future life, will do well to begin with a comparison between "the wisdom of the Egyptians" and the simplicity of the Hebrews in this regard. The subject is too large for us to develop here, and we mention it only to show how many suggestive vistas are opened up to right and left, as we travel by the path Mr. Taylor marks out for us. Any theory of "development" in religion must take account of the

phenomenon which Egypt presents on the very threshold of history—a religion at the same time so strangely advanced and so strangely primitive and childish.

Mr. Taylor's account of Buddhism and its "view of God and the world" is interesting, but all too brief. His explanation of Nirvâna is probably as just as the perplexing subject admits of. He points out that the *Book of the Great Decease* stops short and turns back just as one expects an account of Nirvâna.

Buddha's teachings did but make clear that Nirvâna is a condition over which the law of causality, with its content of sorrow, death, and rebirth, has no sway. . . . No light is thrown on the condition, existent or non-existent, conscious or unconscious, of the Arahant after death. . . . Nothing might be predicated of it which might be predicated of life, except in this negative mode, that all short-coming, suffering, need, desire, is satisfied or quenched. But consciousness was one of the links in the chain of causation; and whatever made up that passing delusion, human individuality, was also part of the same chain.

Buddha did not explicitly state that extinction was the outcome of his system, because if his followers could not understand so much as that, they understood nothing of what he would teach them. Such a gladly anticipated goal of human life is, indeed, almost unintelligible to the Western mind, but Mr. Taylor says it

is not preposterous from the standpoint of the long-cumulating Indian yearning for release from mutability and that embodiment of it, the human individuality. . . . The best which can be is but the same as never to have been.

Truly, the study of human ideals leads us into strange regions! And strangest and most instructive of all, perhaps, to the student of human nature, is the revival of this "ancient ideal" in our own country and

our own time under the name of Esoteric Buddhism, with Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Lillie for its prophets!

It was wise on Mr. Taylor's part to spend his strength chiefly on portraying the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome. Here the light of history shines clear, materials are abundant, and we leave the nebulous and hardly intelligible world of Eastern religions for views of life which present at the same time many points of contact and many features of contrast with the ideals of modern Christian nations. There is great charm about the pictures which Mr. Osborn Taylor so skilfully draws. His chapter on "Greek Beginnings" introduces us to the characteristic geography of the country, the Hellenic race in its earliest developments, and the effect of environment upon the budding germ. The discoveries of Schliemann and others at Tiryns, Mycenæ, and elsewhere are here duly utilised. But the Greek spirit is hardly itself till we come to Homer. The chapter on Homer is delightful, and contains many passages we should like to quote. The intense *humanism* of the Greek ideal is well brought out. The Greek enjoyed life and sought for nothing better than earthly life at its highest. Life means the exercise of faculty and the joy which that exercise brings. Sometimes—in Homer and the early days—the highest exercise of faculty is seen in the accomplishment of strenuous deed, bringing glory in its train; sometimes—in Plato and the later periods—Hellenism was identified with the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. But in either case,

the Greek sought to complete himself. In conduct and in that idealising reflex of life which is literature and art, he sought to display heightened human traits and show the man enlarged—more closely kin to the race of gods.

The ideal of Hellenism did not begin and end with man. The Greeks had a religion, but it was essentially human. Mr. Taylor goes so far as to say "Homer and Hesiod made the gods." If that is hardly true in its literalness, it is certainly true that the Greek had no idea of revelation, that neither his knowledge nor his rules of conduct were considered as "revealed." Greek mythology contains rather "dramatic presentations of the gods, which sprang from the Greek artist soul, and afforded no standard of human righteousness or criterion of human sin." Both the source and the sanction of such principles of conduct as animated the Greek at his best and formed in truth his ideals were drawn from what he himself saw and knew.

Directly, luminously, in ways open to the test of reason, they fashioned rules of conduct from their store of experience. In the data of their ethics they included all their knowledge of man and his environment, and their judgments upon life; herein entered their dismal views as to the outworn semblances which twittered out inane existence in the underworld, existence far too blank to hold reward or punishment; herein entered their thoughts of the results of acts on earth and also those farthest generalisations upon life which made up the thought of fate; herein entered those more plastic expressions of the powers which aid or thwart men's lives—those living, human, natural gods.

One of the most interesting questions in Greek mythology concerns the relation of the superhuman, yet most human figures called gods and the *μῦτρα*, *ἄισα*, and other words which represent fate, destiny, the irresistible course of things which masters gods and men alike. Sometimes fate is represented as the decree of Zeus, or is practically identified with the "father of gods and men." But such a description is far from representing the whole state of the case.

Greek poets and thinkers always recognised a certain Necessity—*ἀνάγκη*, to which all beings must bow, a mighty current of energy which was not wholly, perhaps not mainly, ethical. Mr. Taylor says,

The ethical moment is not the sole factor in destiny. Human life lies not altogether within the pale of ethical considerations. . . . So fate never became entirely ethical, but always stood for those limitations on humanity proceeding from man's mortal nature and circumstances out of his control—

Who shall say that Christian ideals of a later time have always satisfactorily disposed of the questions raised by this aspect of human life?

Be that as it may, it is all-important, in trying to understand the Greek view of life, to remember that the Greeks never rose to the conception of an omnipotent God, whose thoughts and purposes embraced and directed the non-ethical processes of nature and the various and often unaccountable strivings of the human will. The *ἦθος* of human character as described by Aristotle is unintelligible if this be not borne in mind. The standard of conduct is high intelligence supported by a steadfast and courageous will; and intelligence implies a fair and just view of human circumstances and conditions, with the chief stress laid upon moderation and the avoidance of excess—*Μηδὲν ἄγαν*. Virtue is a knowledge of the good, knowledge is essential to virtue and inseparable from it; no one—according to the paradox of Socrates, which was a kind of truism in the later Greek view of life—does wrong intentionally. Philosophy is not only a guide of life, it is the very pith and core of life itself, the only means “of holding oneself poised amid life's storms.” Hence springs the Greek idea of the highest good,

which is found in the βίος θεωρητικός, the life of philosophic thought, too high perhaps for the multitude, but attainable by the few. Virtue is simply the perfecting of one's own nature according to the highest human intelligence. For the Greek the only gospel is culture.

We have done poor justice to Mr. Taylor in these few sentences. We have not indeed been trying to summarise his admirable summary, but to present in few words some salient features of an ideal which is continually reappearing in the course of generations, and one with which Christianity has still to reckon. It should be studied, as Mr. Taylor's book enables us to study it, side by side with the Roman ideal, which in some respects was so similar, in others so diametrically opposed to it. We find it difficult to illustrate by extracts the excellence of Mr. Taylor's description of the genius of Rome, but the following may serve as a specimen of his characterisation.

To order well his house and serve the State was the compass of the duty, the compass of the life, of a Roman. To order well his house with respect to things divine and human, to accumulate wealth in his family and civic honours through the discharge of public office, made up his life within the walls of Rome; beyond those walls life meant defence of the city and all its hearths, and the increase of its power and possessions. To the fulfilment of this life all qualities and principles approved in a citizen contributed — energy, gravity, self-control, valour, fortitude, tenacity of purpose, adherence to his solemn word, insistence on his rights, intelligence, and definite conception of ends as well as means, order, obedience, and stern command, and insatiate desire to conquer and acquire for the city and himself. These traits, which made Rome great, are exhibited by her history; they constituted her morality and religion; they were exemplified in the Roman family and stamped upon the Roman law.

One thought which must always be kept in view in considering the genius or the ἦθος of the Roman character is its utter subordination of the individual life. Plato might preach to the Greek the importance of the State—and what the πόλις was to the Athenian, readers of Thucydides know well—but the Hellenic community never exacted the extreme, self-immolating devotion which the Roman gladly yielded to the *civitas* and *patria*. The subordination of members in family life to the one head, the tremendous despotism implied in the *patria potestas*, is one striking illustration of the same principle. The power of life and death lay with the father; he could sell any member of his household. Neither wife nor child had any rights of property as against him; and there was no effective limit to the father's power, except the exigencies of the State, to the solidity and cohesion of which this family despotism every way ministered. Mr. Taylor gives a luminous exposition of these well-known features of Roman life. But we must not be enticed into further exposition of it or of its bearing upon that august but distant and abstract religion with which Roman life in its prime was permeated. We close this part of the subject by quoting a suggestive sentence or two of our author, contrasting Greek and Roman religion.

The religion of the Greek might rise or sink, though never drop from beauty's sphere. But the Roman religion remains bound to the recognised needs and prescribed objects of the Roman State and the Roman household.

The question now before us is, what relation does the Christian ideal bear to the best hopes and aims of mankind as expressed in the religions and national literatures passed in review? A natural transition to

this question would be effected by an examination of the history of Israel, to which Mr. Taylor devotes several interesting chapters. For that, however, our space is insufficient, and we turn at once to the more important subject. Under the general heading of "ideals" we should include (1) the view of the world taken by Christianity, (2) the type of individual character which it sets forth as the pattern to be imitated and the standard to be reached, (3) the goal of the human race contemplated, and (4) the prospects of a future life beyond the grave. Are the ideals of Christianity in this sense of the word different from those of India, Greece, and Rome, of Islam and Buddhism, in kind or only in degree? Can Christianity fairly claim to furnish for mankind an absolute, authoritative and final answer to the questions above suggested; and if so, on what are such claims to be based?

It is not a sufficient answer to fall back on the supernatural origin of Christianity. For this, with many, is the point at issue; and, whatever external evidences in favour of Christianity as the absolute religion be forthcoming, it ought to be possible to present internal evidence such as would directly commend itself to a philosophical inquirer, without reliance upon historical evidence of a miraculous origin, such as would at once be questioned by a certain class of critics. We think Mr. Taylor's attitude is a wise one when he says, "The origin of Christianity cannot be scientifically explained." If the resurrection of Christ be admitted, scientific "explanation" is of course excluded. But if Jesus did not rise again, the belief of the disciples, in spite of all their prejudices and prepossessions, that He did rise, and the founding of a religion upon a delusion, is still

quite inexplicable. And in the present state of the controversy between believers and unbelievers concerning the origins of Christianity, it is better for our present purpose not to rely upon the, to us, evident proofs of supernatural intervention demanded by accepted facts of history. What is more important, however, is to urge that on any theory known to us, Christianity still remains unexplained, unaccounted for. A letter of Professor Huxley in his recently published *Life* gives an almost grotesque account of the facts, showing to what straits an able writer may be reduced in defence of a *parti pris*. He contends that "the success of Christianity" had little or nothing "to do with the truth or falsehood of the story of Jesus," inasmuch as "the Church founded by Jesus has *not* made its way, has *not* permeated the world, but *did* become extinct in the country of its birth — as Nazarenism and Ebionism." On the contrary,

the Church that did make its way and coalesced with the State in the fourth century had no more to do with the Church founded by Jesus than Ultramontaniam has with Quakerism. It is Alexandrian Judaism and Neoplatonistic mystagogy, and as much of the old idolatry and demonology as could be got in under new or old names.¹

Pending the acceptance of this extraordinary travesty of history by some one more competent to judge than a highly accomplished student of physical science bitterly opposed to theology of all kinds, we leave the question of Christian origins as thus far unsolved by unbelievers in the supernatural, and revert to the main question

¹ *Life*, vol. ii. pp. 228, 229. See also a letter to Professor Estlin Carpenter on p. 266: "I cannot see that the moral and religious ideal of early Christianity is new," etc.

whether there is intrinsically in the Christian ideal that which distinguishes it *toto cœlo* from the ideals of Greece and Rome and India, enough to stamp it as absolute and final for mankind.

That is of course a very large question, and we can only indicate the lines along which an answer is to be worked out. A religion which makes such lofty claims should be able to show that it is *actual*, meeting the actually existing needs of mankind, fitting the requirements of humanity as we know it, not constructed in the air for a being like Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch*; that it is *universal*, as meeting the full nature of man in its length and breadth, its full scope, its contingent possibilities; that it is *inclusive* or *comprehensive*, taking up into itself all that is highest and best in the ideals of other religions and past ages; and that it is *final*, in the sense that its precepts contemplate all that man can attain, now and for ever. These are high claims. They never can be demonstrated as facts in science or propositions in Euclid are demonstrated. But the evidence in favour of them is cumulative, and it is steadily growing. The interest of tracing it out in detail forms a large part of the attractiveness of Mr. Taylor's book; though, as we have said, he does not write as an apologist for Christianity.

A part of the proof of the above very comprehensive theses would be found in the way in which the Christian ideal is presented. It is given by God, not discovered by man. Here lies one main distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism, and Christianity is true to the spirit of Israel, out of which, "according to the flesh," it took its rise. And it is given, not in the form of a philosophical system, or an ethical code, or a bold prophecy or forecast of the future, but in the form of a

Life. "That which we have seen and heard and our hands handled concerning the word of life," says St. John, is the substance of the apostolic message. The very difficulty of presenting Christianity systematically is part of a proof of its universal adaptability. Mr. Osborn Taylor puts this well when he says—

Christianity was not a philosophy, not a doctrine, nor a number of doctrines or ethical or religious principles. It was Christ; it was a life—a life which, under the stress of exigency and trial, constantly acted true to the highest motive, and expressed itself in correspondent utterances, beyond the application and guidance of which no life has passed. Besides this human life, so representative of all human life, there were mysterious suggestions of the Divine. The fuller recognition of Christ's nature came to His followers only when He walked no more among them. But from the time when they first followed Him, their minds were never free from the vague, questioning thought, that the Master was more than man. Likewise, all who look into Christ's life, following with as much discrimination as they will the records of it, must recognise the fact, that even while He lived, His personality suggested divinity. And yet more. In the consciousness of Christ Himself, and as He always sought to make clear to His disciples, His human life, with its whisperings of the Divine, was but a fragment. It was led among untoward conditions of sin, by them hemmed in from its full, joyful expansion in beneficence; and it looked forward to a mortal ending, which should be transition to eternal life. The life of Christ on earth carried foreshadowing experiences of eternity.

But if we consider rather the scope of that which Christ promised to men, and, as we believe, had come to earth to obtain for them, the universality and absoluteness of the Christian ideal are made very plain. Put it thus: for the individual, "eternal life," realised in the knowledge of the true God in Christ, in love to God and love to man; for the race, the realisation on earth of the kingdom of God. Let any impartial reader

compare these descriptions (as expounded in the New Testament) of what man should set before him as a standard and may hope for the race in the future, with any "ancient ideals" he chooses to adduce as the best and most permanent reached among the nations at large, and he will see how comprehensive, permanent, and final is the Christian ideal. The mind of man cannot go beyond the idea of a spiritual kingdom, in which personal relations shall be perfected under the rule of a God of infinite wisdom, power, and love. Nor can a higher idea of such personal relations be presented than one in which all mankind may partake, each finding the fulfilment of his own nature and his relation to others in obedience to a law of righteous love and loving righteousness; but not a law imposed from without, rather a principle of life accepted from within as the highest standard for the individual, the family, the Church, the State, and the world.

One section of this widely ramifying subject would be concerned with the new type of individual character introduced by Christianity. In part this has been realised, and the effect may be shown in historical surveys such as those of Uhlhorn and Schmidt. In part it still remains an ideal, but none the less has proved very potent in leading men along paths which they have not yet traversed as far as the goal.

"No dispassionate student of history," says Professor W. Knight, "can doubt that the incoming of the Christian Ethic has resulted in the formation of a new type of character and conduct, which may be literally described as 'a new heaven in a new earth.' . . . The Christian virtues of constancy, patience, tenderness, and devotion between the sexes have given rise to altogether new phases of character—the trust of the child, the devotion of the mother, the self-sacrifice of the sister for the

brother, the toil of the father for his son, and of the son at times for his parents. All this has been the product of a new process of evolution within the Christian brotherhood, but it was not evolved out of the antecedent ethic of the world.”¹

To show this in detail, and how it has sprung partly from the idea of God revealed by Jesus, the Father as seen in the Son; partly from new ideas of man due to Him, man seen in his Elder Brother; partly from the new value given to life by the revelation of immortality; partly from the new views of the race which the germinal teaching of Jesus implanted and left to fructify—all this does not come within our present scope. The little volume by Professor Knight from which we have just quoted, and Dr. Newman Smyth's *Christian Ethics*, are but specimens of modern works in which these thoughts may be found more fully developed. But any account of the novelty or originality of the Christian type of character must be accompanied by illustrations of the extent to which it was not new, but took up into itself what was best in Jew and Greek and Roman. No ideal can claim to be adequate, universal, and final, which does not prove itself to be “heir of all the ages,” as well as parent of the years to come. Of the Christian ideal it may truly be said that “its secret affinity with everything good and true beyond itself is only a sign of its width of sympathy and its world-embracing character, while it may also be evidence of its universal destiny.”

So largely is this the case to-day, that the objection most frequently made is that the ideal of Christianity is too good to be true, “too high for sinful man below

¹ *The Christian Ethic*, Preface, pp. xii, xiii,

the sky," utopian, impracticable. It is no sufficient answer to say that systems of ethics are supposed to exhibit a lofty standard, that none but the loftiest can meet the requirements of the case. That may be true. But Christianity is no "system of ethics," it is a religion, which provides a moral dynamic for the attainment of the standard it sets up. And whether the motive power be studied in its perfection, as exhibited in the pages of the New Testament, or in that limited extent to which it has been actually displayed on the field of history, it would not be difficult to show that Christianity surpasses Stoicism and all the loftiest "ancient ideals" in the moral impulse it imparts and the sustaining moral and spiritual power which it maintains in all those who subject themselves to its benign sway. The motive power of Christianity does not lie simply in the power of lofty truth and inspiring example, though both these are present in the teaching and life of Christ in their most influential forms. Here it is that writers like Professor Huxley, who examine religious truth from without, fail to appreciate the point at issue. No account of the "success of Christianity" can be adequate which simply compares what he calls the "Nazarenism" of Jesus with the Christian creed of the fourth century. It is the old story of Gibbon's "Five Causes" over again. The new moral energy which enabled Christianity in so short a time to conquer the known world was due to the operation of the Spirit whom Christ promised, who is Himself the giver of a religious force, which no analysis of a creed, or comparison of ethical codes, or study of political and social conditions, can explain. "The words that I have spoken unto you," said our Lord, are "spirit and are life." And their self-fulfilling power

could only be shown when His work was done, His mission understood, and His salvation enjoyed in the experience of His followers, who if asked what "ideal" they were trying to realise, could only cry, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

There is but one drawback in studies such as we have been describing, one weak place in the arguments we have been sketching. It is to be found in the wide and terrible chasm between the ideal and the actual in Christendom. Enough has been attained in the course of the centuries to prove the practical as well as the theoretical power of Christian truth. Every day, amidst the most ordinary and commonplace scenes, are to be found examples of the transforming power of Christianity quite as striking in their way as the cloistered virtues of saints or the triumphant endurance of martyrs. But so much remains to be done, even in the Church of Christ before His ideal of it can be realised, that it seems sometimes, as Max Müller expressed it, as if we were living two thousand years before Christ, instead of two thousand after Him.

"The good Lord Jesus has had his day."

Had? Has it come? It has only dawned. It will come by and by.

Oh how could I serve in the wards if the Hope of the world were a lie?

There need be no fear concerning the coming of that Day, nor even transient doubt. But that which more than anything else causes doubt and fear, and that which delays the coming of the Golden Day, is the unfaithfulness of a large part of the Church to its own standard of duty, a feebleness of faith, a spiritual lethargy, a laxity of principle and deficiency of moral

earnestness, which does not allow "the Christian ideal" an opportunity of shining forth in its beauty and splendour. The Church is not straitened in its Lord or in privileges, in its high hopes or its great destinies. It is straitened in itself. And a fresh study of the Christian ideal, in comparison with the best that the world outside Christ can produce, prompts anew the sigh for increased capacity to receive and use what God in Christ has so bountifully provided. "Then shall I run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

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